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The Reefer of '76. ²³⁵



THE REEFER OF '76:

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE FIRE-FLY.

BY HARRY CAVENDISH

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THE REEFER OF '76.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRE-FLY — GETTING UNDER WAY.

"God bless you!" said my old schoolmate, Harry St. Clair, to me, on a bright morning in April, 1776, as I shook his hand for the last time, and leaping into the stern-sheets of the boat, waved my hand in adieu, and bade the crew, with a husky voice, give way. I could scarcely trust myself to look again at the group of old classmates crowding the Battery, for a thousand memories of the past came crowding on me as I gazed. The tears, despite myself, welled into my eyes. Determined that no one should witness my emotions, I turned my face away from the crew, affecting to be engaged in scanning the appearance of the brigantine destined to be my future home, the FIRE-FLY.

She was as beautiful a craft as ever sat the water. Her hull was long and low, of a mold then but lately introduced. There was no poop upon her quarter-deck, nor was she disfigured by the unsightly fore-castle then in use. Never had I seen a more exquisite run than that which her glossy hull developed; while her tall, rakish spars, tapering away into needles, and surrounded by their cobweb tracery of ropes, finished the picture. She was, indeed, all a sailor's heart could desire. When I stepped upon her decks my admiration increased to a tenfold degree. She had seemed from the water to be a craft of not more than a hundred tons burden; but the illusion vanished on ascending her side, when you found yourself on board of a brigantine of not less than thrice that size. Her well-scraped decks; her bright burnished binnacle; the boarding-pikes lashed to the main-beam; the muskets, placed in stands abaft the mainmast; the nicety with which even the smallest rope was coiled down in its place; the guns ranged along on either side under her bulwarks, and especially the air of neatness, finish, and high discipline perceptible about her, convinced me that I was embarking on board a man-of-war of the highest professional character. In fact I knew Captain Stuart's reputation to be that of a rigid disciplinarian.

"Mr. Parker — glad to see you," said my superior, as I touched the deck and raised my hat, "you are punctual, but allow me."

said he, turning to an officer on his right hand, whom I knew to be ~~the~~ lieutenant, "to present you to Mr. Lennox — Mr. Lennox, Mr. Parker."

The usual salutations were exchanged; the boat was hoisted in; and I dove down into the messroom to stow away my traps. It was full of officers. The second lieutenant, the purser, and my three fellow-reefers greeted me heartily, as they rose from a long, narrow table, on which was a formidable display of salt-junk and old Jamaica.

"Just in time, Parker," sang out my old croney, Westbrook, "we're stiffening ourselves to keep up against the fog outside. Push the bottle, Jack — a cut of the junk for Parker — and as there's nothing like beginning right, here's a jolly voyage to us."

The toast had just been drank, amid a whirlwind of huzzas, when the shrill whistle of the boatswain shrieked through the ship, followed by the hoarse cry, "All hands on deck, ahoy!"

In an instant the room was deserted, and we were at our several posts; while the gallant brigantine echoed with the tramp of the crew the orders of the first lieutenant, and the monotonous creaking of the windlass, as the anchor was being hove up to the bows.

By the time the anchor was catted, the morning sun was just beginning to struggle over the heights of Long Island, and as the mists upon the water curled upward in fantastic wreaths beneath his rays, the head of our brigantine began slowly to incline from the breeze. In another instant, as her sails filled, the water could be heard rippling under the cutwater. Then as a sudden puff of wind pressed her down toward her bearings, and we shot rapidly ahead, the bubbles went whizzing along her sides, and eddying around her rudder, swept away astern in a long and glittering wake.

I stood, after the bustle of making sail was over, gazing on the scenery around me, with feelings such as I had never experienced before. It was to be my first voyage in a man-of-war; I would soon, doubtless, imbrue my hands in the blood of my fellow-men; and I myself might never return alive from my cruise. I could not help, therefore, being filled with strange and new emotions, as I leaned over the taffrail, gazing on the now fast-receding town, and recurring, again and again, to the many happy days I had spent in my native city and to the dear faces there which I might never see again. But gradually these feelings were lost in the admiration enkindled in my bosom by the beauty of the surrounding scenery.

It was indeed a glorious sight which opened around me. Right in the wake of the brigantine lay the city, still partly shrouded in the morning mists; while the background was filled up by a range of uplands, through which a narrow opening disclosed where the Hudson rolled his arrowy course. To the right lay Governor's Island, the East River, with its shipping, and the verdant shores of Long Island: while on the left rose up the bluff highlands of Staten Island, emerging, as it were, from a cloud of mist, and crowned with antique farm-houses, rich fields of verdant grass, and here and there

a strip of woodland, as yet sparsely decked with its new-found leaves. Directly ahead were the Narrows, with the frowning heights on either hand, while a white, glittering line on the horizon without, and the long, undulating swell, heaving in through the strait, betokened our near approach to the ocean. A few sails flashed in the distance. All was still, beautiful, and serene. Occasionally, however, the measured sound of oars would give token of a passing fishing-boat, or a snatch of a drinking-song would float from some craft idly anchored in the stream. A few gulls screamed overhead. A flock of smaller water-fowl wheeled and settled on a strip of white, sandy beach just outside the Narrows. The surf broke with a hollow roar, in a long line of foam, along the neighboring coast; while out on the seaboard hung a dim haze, undulating slowly beneath the sun's rays as he rose, blood red in the eastern horizon.

"A fine breeze for our first day's cruise," said Westbrook, "and, faith, a deuce of a one it will be, if we should happen to be caught by one of King George's frigates, and either be strung up for rebels at the yard-arm, or stifled to death in one of his cursed prison-hulks. What think you of the prospect, comrades, isn't it pleasant?"

"Pleasant do ye call it?" said Patrick O'Shaughnessy, a reefer of about my own age, who was a dangerously late emigrant to the colony; "sure and it is rather at my father's hearth I would be, in dear, ould Ireland, afther all, if we're to be thrated as rebels the day."

"Your father's hearth, Pat," said Westbrook; "and do you really mean to say that they have such things in Galway, or wherever else it was that you were suffered to eat potatoes in ignorance, until your guardians brought you out here on a speculation?"

"By St. Patrick, your head must be hard," said the irritated reefer; and it's well that my shillelah isn't on the wrist —"

"Pshaw! now you're not angry, comrade mine," said Westbrook, laughing good-humoredly, but repenting already of his reckless speech; "come, we've got a long cruise before us, and we shall have enough of quarrels with those rascally British, without getting up any among ourselves," and he frankly extended his hand.

"Sure and it's a gentleman ye are, Mister Westbrook, and I'd like to see the spalpeen that says ye ain't" said O'Shaughnessy, grasping the proffered hand, and shaking it heartily.

"Yonder are the white caps of the Atlantic, rolling ahead," said I, as we stretched past Sandy Hook, and beheld the broad ocean opening in all its vastness and sublimity before us.

We were now fairly afloat. At that time the enterprise in which we had embarked was one of the greatest danger, for not only were we liable to the usual dangers of nautical warfare, but we were, as yet, uncertain in what manner we should be treated in case of a capture. But we were all confident in the justness of our country's cause, and being such, we were prepared for either fortune.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESCUE.

NEARLY a week elapsed without any thing occurring to dissipate the monotony of our voyage, excepting a momentary alarm at the appearance of a frigate, which we at first took to be an English one but which subsequently turned out to be a Frenchman. Meanwhile, we were not without many a merry bout in the gun-room, and over our salt-junk and Jamaica we enjoyed ourselves as hilariously as many an epicure would over his Burgundy and turtle-soup. The jest went round; the song was gayly trolled; many a merry story was rehearsed, and anticipations of a successful cruise were mingled with determinations to bear the worst, if fortune should so will it. Under the broad flag of New York, we were resolved "to do or to die," against the prouder ensign of an unjust and tyrannical king.

We had run down well nigh to the Windward Islands, and were beating up against a head-wind, when we spoke a French merchantman, who informed us that he had passed a rich Indiaman, but the day before, bound from London to Jamaica. After inquiring the course of the Englishman our skipper hauled his wind, and bidding the friendly Gaul, "*un bon voyage*," we steered away in pursuit of our prize. Night settled down upon us before we caught sight of her; but still crowding on all sail we kept on our way.

It was about eight bells in the middle watch, and I was on the point of preparing to go below, after the relief should have been called, when I thought I heard a rattling of cordage down in the thick bank of fog to leeward. I listened attentively, and again heard the sound distinctly, but this time it was like the rollicking of oars.

"Hist! Benson," said I to the boatswain, who was standing near me at the moment; "hist! lay your ear close to the water here, and listen if you do not hear the sound of oars."

The old fellow got into the main chains, and holding on with one hand to them, cautiously leaned over and listened for several minutes.

"I hear nothing, sir," said he in a whisper, "it's as still as death down in yonder fog-bank. But I'll keep a sharp lookout, for it may be there's a sail close on to us, without our knowing it, in this mist."

The night had been intensely dark, but was now breaking away overhead, where a few stars could be seen twinkling on the patches of half-hid azure sky. All along the horizon, however, but especially

to leeward, hung a dark, massy curtain of mist, shrouding every thing on the seaboard in impenetrable obscurity, and, like piled-up fleeces, laying thick and palpable upon the immediate surface of the ocean, but gradually becoming thinner and lighter as it ascended upward, until it finally terminated in a thin, gauze-like haze, almost obscuring the stars in the mid heaven above. So dense was the mist in our immediate vicinity, that the man at the helm could not discern the end of the bowsprit; while the upper yards of the brigantine looked like shadowy lines in the gloom. Occasionally, the light breeze would undulate the fog, lifting it for a moment from the water, and disclosing to our sight a few fathoms of the unruffled sea around us; but before a minute had passed, the vapors would again settle in fantastic wreaths upon the face of the deep, wrapping us once more in the profoundest obscurity. Not a sound was heard except the occasional rubbing of the boom, the sullen flap of a sail, or the low ripple of the swell under the cut-water, as we stole noiselessly along in the impenetrable gloom. The tread of one of the watch, or the sudden thrashing of a reefpoint against the sail, broke on the ear with startling distinctness. Suddenly I heard a noise as of a stifled cry coming up out of the thick fog to leeward, from a spot apparently a few points more on our quarter than the last sound. The boatswain heard it also, and turning quickly to me, he said —

“There’s something wrong there, Mr. Parker, or my name isn’t Jack Benson. And look — don’t you see a ship’s royal through the fog there — just over that gun — that shadowy object, like a whiff of tobacco smoke, down here to the right is what I mean.”

“By heavens! you are right — and see! — yonder comes her fore-top-mast, rising above the undulating mist.”

“Ship ahoy!” hailed the second lieutenant, that moment appearing on deck, and listening to my report; “what craft is that?”

The hoarse summons sailed down to leeward, like the wailing of some melancholy spirit, but no answer was returned. A couple of minutes elapsed.

“Ship ah — o — o — y!” sung out the officer again, “answer, or I’ll fire into you — this is the Fire-Fly, an armed vessel of the free State of New York.

“We are a merchantman, belonging to Philadelphia,” answered a gruff voice in reply.

“Send your boat on board.”

“We can’t,” answered the same voice, “for one of them was washed overboard, three days ago, in a gale, and the other one was swamped.”

At this instant, one of those sudden puffs of winds, to which I have already alluded, momentarily swept away the fog from around the approaching ship, and we beheld, to our astonishment, that her sails had been backed, and that she was slowly falling astern of us, as if with the intention of slipping across our wake, and going off to windward.

"Fill away again, there," thundered the lieutenant, perceiving their maneuver, "or I'll fire on you — fill away, I say."

"By the holy apostles," said O'Shaughnessy at this moment, "is'nt there a schooner's mast, on the lee-quarter of the fellow? — yes — there it is — see!"

Every eye was instantly turned in the direction to which he had pointed. A single glance established the keenness of his vision. Right under the weather-quarter of the merchantman, might be seen the mast of apparently a small schooner. The sails were down and only the bare stick could be discerned; but the whole truth flashed upon us as if with the rapidity of lightning.

"The ship is in the hands of pirates," I exclaimed involuntarily. "God help the poor wretches who compose her crew."

"Boarders ahoy!" sung out the voice of the captain, breaking like a trumpet-call, upon the momentary silence of the horror-struck crew; "muster on the fore-castle, all — up with the helm, quarter-master — ready to grapple there — heave," and the huge irons, as we bore down upon the ship, went crashing among her hamper.

The instant that discovered the true nature of our position worked a change in the whole appearance of the merchantman. Her deserted decks swarmed with men; her silence gave place to shouts, oaths and clashing of arms; and after a momentary confusion, we saw, in the obscurity, a dark group of ruffians clustered on the fore-castle awaiting our attack.

"Boarders ahoy!" again shouted Captain Stuart, brandishing his sword on high, "follow me," and springing into the fore-rigging of the merchantman, he leveled a pistol at the first pirate attempting to oppose him, and followed by a score, and more, of hardy tars, rushed, the next instant, down upon her decks.

"Stand to your posts, my men," thundered the pirate captain, as he stood by the mainmast, surrounded by his swarthy followers. "stand to your posts, and remember, you fight for your lives — come on," and drawing a pistol from his belt, he leveled it at the first lieutenant, who, pressing on, aside of Captain Stuart, received the ball in his side, and fell, apparently, lifeless on the deck.

"Revenge! revenge!" thundered the captain, turning to cheer on his men; "sweep the miscreants from the deck, on — on," and waving his sword aloft, he dashed into the fray. The men answered by a cheer, and bore down upon the pirates with an impetuosity, doubly more vehement from their desire to avenge the fallen lieutenant.

For full five minutes the contest was terrific. Desperation lent additional vigor to the freebooters' muscles, while our own men were inflamed to madness by the fall of Lenox. I had never been in a conflict of any kind whatever before, and for the first few moments — I will not hesitate to own it — a strange whirling sensation, akin to fear, swept through my brain. But half a minute had not passed before it had vanished; and I felt a wild tumultuous excitement which seemed to endow me with the strength of a Hercules. I lost

all sight of the turmoil around me. I could only see that it had become a general *melee*, in which personal prowess was of more importance than discipline. I heard a wild mingling of oaths, shouts, cries for mercy, the clashing of arms, the explosion of pistols, the shrieks of the wounded, and the fierce trampling of men struggling together in the last stage of mortal combat. But I had no time for more detailed observations. A giant ruffian singling me out from the crowd, rushed upon me with uplifted cutlass, and the next instant I would have been clove in twain, had I not caught the blow upon my blade. But so tremendous was its force that it splintered my trusty steel to fragments, and sent a shock through every nerve of my system. I staggered. But not a moment was to be lost. Already the gigantic arm of the pirate was raised on high. Happily my pistols were both as yet untouched. Springing back a step or two, I jerked one from my belt, leveled it at his brain, and fired. He whirled around as if intoxicated, staggered, would have caught at the mast for support, and fell over dead upon the deck.

But I had no leisure to regard my fallen foe. The contest still raged around me fiercer than ever. On our side of the ship, however, the pirates had broken, and were retreating slowly and doggedly toward the stern. We pressed on hotly in pursuit, while shouts, curses, and huzzas, the groans of the dying, and the fierce rattling of cutlasses, formed a tumult around us of stirring excitement; but just as I rushed past the gangway, followed by a few of the bravest of our crew, a wild, long, thrilling scream from the cabin, rose up over all the uproar of the conflict. It could come from no one but a woman — that prolonged cry of mortal agony! In an instant the retreating pirates were forgotten; I thought only of the danger of the sufferer below. Dashing aside, with the power of a giant, a brawny ruffian who would have impeded my progress, I sprang, at one leap, half way down the gangway, and with another stride found myself in the cabin of the ship.

Never shall I forget the scene that there met my eyes.

The apartment in which I stood was elegantly, even luxuriously furnished, presenting the appearance rather of a sumptuous drawing-room, than of a merchantman's cabin. The state-rooms were of mahogany, elegantly inlaid with ebony. A service of silver and rich-cut glass were ranged in the buffet around the mast. Silken ottomans stretched along the sides of the room; a silver lamp of exquisite workmanship, depended from the ceiling; and a carpet of gorgeous pattern, and of the finest quality, covered the floor. But not a solitary individual was to be seen. A lady's guitar, however, lay carelessly on one of the ottomans, and a few books were scattered around it in easy negligence. Could I be deceived with this corroborative testimony? Yet where was the owner of these little trifles? These reflections did not, however, occupy an instant; for I had scarcely finished a rapid survey of the cabin before another, and another shriek, ringing out just before me, roused every emotion of my heart to an uncontrollable fury. Catching sight of an undula-

ting curtain at the further end of the apartment, which I had imagined was only the drapery of the windows, I darted forward, and lifting up the damask, started back in horror at the sight that met my eyes.

This after cabin was smaller, and even more luxuriously fitted up than the other. But I did not remark this, at the time, for such a scene as I then witnessed, God grant I may never be called to look upon again.

As I pushed aside the curtain three swarthy, olive-complexioned ruffians, dressed with more elaboration than any of their comrades I had yet seen, turned hastily around as if interrupted in some infamous deed, scowling upon me with the looks of demons. It needed but a glance to detect their fiendish work. A well-dressed elderly man was extended at their feet, weltering in his blood. On an ottoman before them half lying, half sitting, was one of the fairest beings I had ever seen, her night dress disordered, her frame trembling, and her hair, wild and dishevelled, hanging in loose tresses from her shoulders. Her hands were covered in one or two places with blood; her eyes were wild; her face was flushed; and she panted as one does whose strength has been nearly overtasked in a desperate struggle. Never shall I forget the unutterable agony depicted on that countenance when I first entered; never shall I forget the lightning-like change which came over it as her eye fell upon me. Rushing frantically forward, while joy beamed in every feature of her face, she flung herself into my arms, shrieking hysterically.

“Oh! save me — save me! for the love of your mother save me!”

My sudden appearance had startled the three ruffians, and for a moment they stood idle, suffering her to dart between them; but at the sound of her voice, they rushed as one man upon me. The odds were fearful, but I felt, at that instant, as if I could have dared heaven and earth in behalf of that suffering maiden. Claspings my arm around her waist, and retreating hastily into the other cabin I shouted aloud for aid, parrying, with a cutlass I picked up at random, the attack of the miscreants. But the attempt was desperation itself. Already I had received two cuts across my arm, and I could scarcely hold my weapon in it, when the foremost ruffian, leaving my death, as he thought, to his comrades, laid his unholy hand once more upon the maiden. Good God! I thought my heart would have burst at this new insult. My determination was quicker than the electric shock of heaven. Hastily releasing the lovely burden from my hold, I seized my remaining pistol with the disengaged hand, and before the villain could perceive my purpose planted it against his face and fired. The brains spattered the ceiling, and even fell upon my own face and arm. But the miscreant was dead. Oh, the joy, the rapture of that moment! I heard, too, as the report subsided, the death-groan of another of the ruffians falling beneath the avenging cutlass of our men, who now victorious on deck, came pouring down the hatchway. In another instant, as a shout of victory rang through the cabin, I had raised the almost senseless girl.

from the floor. She looked eagerly into my face, gazed wildly around, uttered a cry of joy, and convulsively clinging to me, as if for shelter, buried her head upon my bosom, and burst into a passion of hysteric tears.

The emotions of that moment were such as I had never deemed mortal being capable of experiencing. Feelings I cannot even now describe whirled through me, until my brain seemed almost to spin around in a delirium of joy. Yet there was a holiness in my emotions, far, far different from the common sensations of pleasure. I felt—I knew not how, a sudden interest in the fair being, sobbing convulsively upon my shoulder, which made her already seem dearer to me than life itself. I pressed her involuntarily to me; but a mother could not have done so with more purity to a new-born infant. Her sobs melted me so that I could scarcely keep my own eyes dry.

“God bless you, my poor, sweet girl,” I said in a husky voice; “you are among friends now.”

The tone, the words went to her very heart; she clasped me convulsively again, and burst into a fresh flood of tears. Poor dove! she had just escaped from the hands of the spoiler, and fluttered, as yet, involuntarily on her rescuer’s bosom.

“God in heaven bless you,” she murmured, betwixt her sobs, after a while raising her tearful countenance from my shoulder, and looking upon me with eyes whose depth, and whose gratitude I had never seen equaled—“God bless you, sir, for this act. Oh! if a life of prayers for your welfare can repay you,” she continued, with uplifted hands, and a countenance, which, in despite of its earnestness, was crimsoned with blushes, “it shall be freely given by me. But my uncle! my poor uncle! alas! they have murdered him!” and she covered her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out the fearful sight.

“Say nothing, my dear girl,” said I, the tears standing in my own eyes, “all are friends around you now. The ship has been rescued—the pirates are no more. Compose yourself—none here will harm you—your slightest wish shall be attended to, and you shall be served with the purity with which we serve a saint. Do not thus give way to grief—let me insist on your retiring—here is your maid,” said I, as the trembling creature emerged from a state-room, in which she had locked herself when her mistress was in danger, “a little rest will compose you.”

“Oh! my uncle, my more than parent—heaven bless you!” sobbed the beautiful, but still agitated girl, as she suffered herself to be led away by her little less agitated maid.

The prize turned out to be the British West-Indiaman, which had been surprised by pirates about a quarter of an hour before we hailed her. The beautiful being and her uncle were the only passengers. It is needless to say that very few of the ruffians survived the conflict, and that those who did were tried summarily by a court-martial the next day, and hung at the ship’s yard-arm. The little schooner, or rather oyster-boat, was scuttled and sunk.

The wounds on my arm proved sericus, though not dangerous, but they did not disable me from continuing on duty. I would willingly have lost the limb in such a holy cause.

The first appearance on deck of Beatrice Derwent — for such was the name of her I had rescued — was at the burial of her uncle on the evening succeeding the recapture of the ship. She appeared, leaning on the arm of her maid, and as her eye, just lifted for one moment from the deck, happened to catch mine, her face became suffused with crimson, and such a look of gratitude toward the living, combined with grief for the dead, flashed over her countenance as I never saw equaled. But in another moment her eyes dropped once more on the corpse, and I saw, by the convulsive heaving of her bosom, how fearful was her grief. When the corpse was launched into the deep her sorrow broke all the restraint of custom, and she sobbed aloud. Directly, however, they subsided partially; and as she turned to re enter the cabin, the last rays of the setting sun, gilding the masthead with a crown of glory, and glittering along the surface of the deep, lingered a moment on her sunny hair, like the smile of the departed spirit.

The prize meantime, proving to be richly laden, was allotted to me to conduct into port, as the first lieutenant's wound prevented him from assuming the command, and the second lieutenant chose rather to remain with the brigantine. Beatrice Derwent was, as a matter of course, to continue on board the merchantman. Thus did destiny again link my fate with this lovely creature, and by one of those simple accidents which so often occur, open for me a train of events, whose transaction it is my purpose to detail in the following crude autobiography.

The sensations with which I watched the receding brigantine, after assuming my new command, and hauling up on our course, may well be imagined. Scarcely a fortnight had elapsed since I first launched on the deep, a nameless, unknown, irresponsible midshipman; and now by one of fortune's wildest freaks, I was commanding a prize of untold value, and become the protector of the loveliest of her sex.

“There's a divinity that shapes our fortunes;
Rough hew them as we will.”

It was not till the third day after parting company with the brigantine, that Miss Derwent, with her maid, appeared once more upon deck. The shock of her uncle's death had brought on an illness, which confined her during that time to the cabin; and even now, there was a languor in her fine countenance, and a melancholy her dark eye, which, though they added to the interest of her appearance, betokened the acuteness of her grief. She was attired in a dark silken dress; her hair was plainly braided back, and she wore no ornaments of any kind whatever. Rarely had I beheld a vision of such surpassing loveliness. I stepped forward to assist her to a seat. She smiled faintly, her eyes sparkled a moment and then a deep blush shot across her saddened features. But I will not

detail the scene that ensued. Suffice it to say that, from that moment I loved Beatrice; and that though she had not bid me hope, there was nothing in her conduct to bid me despair.

CHAPTER III.

BEATRICE DERWENT — THE PARTING.

How often has the story of the heart been told ! The history of the love of one bosom is that of the millions who have alternated between hope and fear since first the human heart began to throb. The gradual awakening of our affection; the first consciousness we have of our own feelings; the tumultuous emotions of doubt and certainty we experience, and the wild rapture of the moment, when, for the first time, we learn that our love is requited, have all been told by pens more graphic than mine, and in language as nervous as that of Fielding, or as moving as that of Richardson.

The daily companionship into which I was now thrown with Beatrice was, of all things, the most dangerous to my peace. From the first moment when I beheld her she had occupied a place in my thoughts; and the footing of acquaintanceship, not to say intimacy, on which we now lived, was little calculated to banish her from my mind. Oh ! how I loved to linger by her side during the moonlight evenings of that balmy latitude, talking of a thousand things which, at other times, would have been void of interest, or gazing silently upon the peaceful scene around, with a hush upon our hearts it seemed almost sacrilege to break. And at such times how the merest trifle would afford us food for conversation, or how eloquent would be the quiet of that holy silence ! Yes ! the ripple of a wave, or the glimmer of the spray, or the twinkling of a star, or the voice of the night-wind sighing low, or the deep, mysterious language of the unquiet ocean, had, at such moments, a beauty in them, stirring every chord in our hearts, and filling us, as it were, with sympathy not only for each other, but for every thing in nature. And when we would part for the night, I would pace for hours my solitary watch, thinking of Beatrice, with all the rapt devotion of a first, pure love.

But this could not last. The dream was pleasant, yet it might not lead me to dishonor. Beatrice was under my protection, and was it right to avail myself of that advantage to win her heart, when I knew from the difference of our stations in life, that it was madness to think that she could ever be mine. What ? the heiress of one of the richest Jamaica residents, the grand-daughter of a baron, and

the near connection of some of the wealthiest tory families of the south, to be wooed as an equal by one who not only had no fortune but his sword, but was the advocate, in the eyes of her advisers, of a rebellious cause! Nor did the service I had rendered her lessen the difficulty of my position.

These feelings, however, had rendered me more guarded, perhaps more cold, in the presence of Beatrice, for a day or two preceding our arrival in port. I felt my case hopeless: and I wished, by gradually avoiding the danger, to lessen the agony of the final separation. Besides, I knew nothing as yet of the sentiments of Beatrice toward myself. I was a novice in love; and the silent abstraction of her manner, together with the gradually increasing avoidance of my presence, filled me with uneasiness, despite the conviction of the hopelessness of my suit. But what was it to me, I would say, even if Beatrice loved me not? Was it not better that it should be so? Alas! reason and love are two very different things, and though I was better satisfied with myself when we made the lights of Charleston harbor, yet the almost total separation which had thus for nearly two days existed between Beatrice and myself, left my heart tormented with all a lover's fears.

It was the last evening we would spend together, perhaps for years. The wind had died away, and we slowly floated upward with the tide, the shores of James Island hanging like a dark cloud on the larboard beam, and the lights of the distant city, glimmering along the horizon inboard; while no sound broke the stillness of the hour, except the occasional wash of a ripple, or the song of some negro fishermen floating across the water. As I stood by the starboard railing, gazing on this scenery, I could not help contrasting my present situation with what it had been but a few short weeks before, when I left the harbor of New York. So intensely was I wrapt in these thoughts, that I did not notice the appearance of Beatrice on deck, until a question of the helmsman, dissolving my reverie, caused me to look around me. For a moment I hesitated whether I should join her or not. My feelings at length, however, prevailed; and crossing the deck, I soon stood at her side. She did not appear to notice my presence, but with her elbow resting on the railing, and her head buried in her hand, was pensively looking down upon the tide.

"Miss Derwent!" said I, with a voice that I was conscious trembled, though I scarcely knew why it did.

"Mr. Parker!" she ejaculated, in a tone of surprise, her eyes sparkling, as starting suddenly around she blushed over neck and brow, and then as suddenly dropped her eyes to the deck, and began playing with her fan. For a moment we were both mutually embarrassed. A woman is, at such times, the first to speak.

"Shall we be able to land to-night?" said Beatrice.

"Not unless a breeze springs up—"

"Oh! then I hope we shall not have one," ejaculated the guileless girl; but instantly becoming aware of the interpretation which

might be put upon her remark, she blushed again, and cast her eyes anew upon the deck. A strange, joyous hope shot through my bosom; but I made a strong effort and checked my feelings. Another silence ensued, which every moment became more oppressive.

"You join, I presume, your cousin's family, on landing," said I, at length. "I will, as soon as we come to anchor, send a messenger ashore, apprising him of your presence on board."

"How shall I ever thank you sufficiently," said Beatrice, raising her dark eyes frankly to mine, "for your kindness? Never—never," she continued, more warmly, "shall I forget it."

My soul thrilled to its deepest fiber at the words, and more than all, at the tone of the speaker; and it was with some difficulty that I could answer calmly,—

"The consciousness of having ever merited Miss Derwent's thanks, is a sufficient reward for all I have done. That she will not wholly forget me is more than I could ask, but believe me, Beatrice," said I, unable to restrain my feelings, and venturing for the first time, to call her by that name, "though we shall soon part forever, never, never can I forget these few happy days."

"Why, do you leave Charleston instantly?" said she, with emotion. "Shall I not see you again after my landing?"

I know not how it is, but there are moments when our best resolutions vanish as though they had never been made; and now, as I looked upon the earnest countenance of Beatrice, and felt the full meaning of the words so innocently said, a wild hope once more shot across my bosom, and I said softly,—

"Why, Beatrice, would it be aught to you whether we ever met again?"

She lifted her eyes up to mine, and gazed for an instant almost reproachfully upon me, but she did not answer. There was something, however, in the look encouraging me to go on. I took her hand: she did not withdraw it: and, in a few hurried but burning words, I poured forth my love.

"Say, Beatrice!" I said, "can you, do you love me?"

She raised her dark eyes in answer up to mine, with an expression I shall never forget, and murmured, half-inaudibly,—

"You know—you know I do," and then overcome by the consciousness of all she had done, she burst into tears.

Can words describe my feelings? Oh! if I had the eloquence of a Rousseau I could not portray the emotions of that moment. They were wild; they were almost uncontrollable. The tone, the words, every thing convinced me that I was beloved; and all my well-formed resolutions were dissipated in a moment. Had we been alone I would have caught Beatrice to my bosom; but as it was, I could only press her hand in silence. I needed not to be assured, in more direct terms, of her affection. Henceforth she was to me my all. She was the star of my destiny:

The first dawn of morning beheld us abreast of the town, and at an early hour the equipage of Mr. Rochester, the relative of Bea-

trice, and whose guest she was now to be, was in waiting on the quay for my beautiful charge.

"You will come to-night, will you not?" said she, as I pressed her hand, on conducting her to the carriage.

I bowed affirmatively, the door was closed, and the sumptuous equipage, with its servants in livery, moved rapidly away.

It was now that I had parted with Beatrice, that the conviction of the almost utter hopelessness of my suit forced itself upon my mind. Mr. Rochester was the nearest male relative of Beatrice, being her maternal uncle. Her parents were both deceased, and the uncle, whose death I have related, together with the Carolinian nabob, were, by her father's will, her guardians. Mr. Rochester was, therefore, her natural protector. Her fortune, though large, was fettered with a condition that she should not marry without her guardian's consent, and I soon learned that a union had long been projected between her and the eldest son of her surviving guardian. How little hope I had before, the reader knows, but that little was now fearfully diminished. It is true Beatrice had owned that she loved me, but how could I ask her to sacrifice the comforts as well as the elegancies of life, to share her lot with a poor unfriended midshipman? I could not endure the thought. What! should I take advantage of the gratitude of a pure young being — a being, too, who had always been nourished in the lap of luxury — to subject her to privation, and perhaps to beggary? No rather would I have lived wholly absent from her presence. I could almost have consented to lose her love, sooner than be the instrument of inflicting on her miseries so crushing. My only hope was in winning a name that would yet entitle me to ask her hand as an equal: my only fear was, lest the length of time I should be absent from her side, would gradually lose me her affection. Such is the jealous fear of a lover's heart.

CHAPTER IV.

FORT MOULTRIE.

A DISPATCH from the Secretary of State, to Gov. Eden, of Maryland, had been intercepted by Com. Barron, of the Virginia service, in the Chesapeake. From this missive, intelligence was gleaned that the capital of South Carolina was to be attacked; and on my arrival I found every exertion being made to place it in a posture of defence. I instantly volunteered, and the duties thus assumed, engrossing a large part of my time, left me little leisure, even for my suit. Still, however, I occasionally saw Beatrice, though the cold hauteur with

which my visits were received by her uncle's family, much diminished their frequency

As the time rolled on, however, and the British fleet did not make its appearance, there were not wanting many who believed that the contemplated attack had been given up. But I was not of the number. So firm, indeed, was my conviction of the truth of the intelligence, that I ran out to sea every day or two, in a smart-sailing pilot-boat, in order, if possible, to gain the first positive knowledge of the approach of our foes.

"A sail!" shouted our look-out one day, after we had been standing off and on for several hours,—“a sail, broad on the weather-beam!”

Every eye was instantly turned toward the quarter indicated; spy-glasses were brought into requisition: and in a few minutes we made out distinctly nearly a dozen sail, on the larboard tack, looming up on the northern seaboard. We counted no less than six men-of-war, besides several transports. Every thing was instantly wet down to the trucks and, heading at once for Charleston harbor, we soon bore the alarming intelligence to the inhabitants of the town.

That night all was terror and bustle in the tumultuous capital. The peaceful citizens, unused to bloodshed, gazed upon the approaching conflict with mingled resolution and terror, now determining to die rather than to be conquered, and now trembling for the safety of their wives and little ones. Crowds swarmed the wharves, and even put out into the bay to catch a sight of the approaching squadron. At length it appeared off the bar, and we soon saw by their buoying out the channel that an immediate attack was to take place by the sea,—while expresses brought us hasty intelligence of the progress made by the royal troops in landing on Long Island. But want of water among our foes, and the indecision of their General, protracted the attack for more than three weeks, a delay which we eagerly improved.

At length, on the morning of the 28th of June, it became evident that our assailants were preparing to commence the attack. Eager to begin my career of fame, I sought a post under Col. Moultrie, satisfied that the fort on Sullivan's Island would have to maintain the brunt of the conflict.

Never shall I forget the sight which presented itself to me on reaching our position. The fort we were expected to maintain was a low building of palmetto-logs, situated on a tongue of the island, and protected in the rear from the royalist troops, on Long Island, by a narrow channel, usually fordible, but now, owing to the late prevalence of easterly winds, providentially filled to a depth of some fathoms. In front of us lay the mouth of the harbor, commanded on the opposite shore, at the distance of about thirty-five hundred yards, by another fort in our possession, where Col. Gadsen with a respectable body of troops was posted. To the right opened the bay, sweeping almost a quarter of the compass around the horizon, toward the north,—and on its extreme verge, to the northwest, rose up Haddrell's point, where General Lee, our commander-in-

chief, had taken up a position. About half way around, and due west from us, lay the city, at the distance of nearly four miles, the view being partly intercepted by the low, marshy island, called Shute's Folly, between us and the town.

"We have but twenty-eight rounds of powder, Mr. Parker, a fact I should not like generally known," said Col. Moultrie to me; "but as you have been in action before, more than I can say of a dozen of my men — I know you may be trusted with the information."

"Never doubt the brave continentals here, Colonel," I replied, "they are only four hundred, but we shall teach yon baggarts a lesson, before to-day is over, which they shall not soon forget."

"Bravo, my gallant young friend! With my twenty-six eighteen and twenty-four pounders, plenty of powder, and a few hundred fire-eaters like yourself, I would blow the whole fleet out of water. But after all," said he, with good-humored raillery, "though you'll not glory in rescuing Miss Derwent to-day, you'll fight not a whit worse for knowing that she is in Charleston, eh! But come don't blush — you must be my aid — I shall want you, depend upon it, before the day is over. If those red-coats here, behind us, attempt to take us in the rear, we shall have hot work, — for by my hopes of eternal salvation, I'll drive them back, man and officer, in spite of Gen. Lee's fears that I can not. But — ha! there comes the first bomb!"

Looking upward as he spoke I beheld a large, dark body flying through the air; and in the next instant, amidst a cheer from our men, it splashed into the morass behind us, simmered, and went out.

"Well sent, old Thunderer!" ejaculated the imperturbable colonel, "but, faith, many another good bomb will you throw away on the swamps and palmetto-logs you sneer at. Open upon them, my brave fellows, as they come around, and teach them what Carolinians can do. Remember you fight, to-day, for your wives, your children, and your liberties. The continental Congress forever against the minions of a tyrannical court."

The battle was now begun. One by one the British men-of-war, coming gallantly into their respective stations, and dropping their anchors with masterly coolness, opened their batteries upon us, firing with a rapidity and precision that displayed their skill. The odds against which we had to contend were indeed formidable. Directly in front of us, with springs on their cables, and supported by two frigates, were anchored a couple of two deckers; while the three other men-of-war were working up to starboard, and endeavoring to get a position between us and the town so as to cut off our communication with Haddrell's point.

"Keep it up — run her out again!" shouted the captain of a gun beside me, who was firing deliberately, but with murderous precision, every shot of his piece telling on the hull of one of the British cruisers; "huzza for Carolina!"

“Here comes the broadside of Sir Peter’s two-decker !” shouted another one; “make way for the British iron among the palmetto logs. Ha ! old yellow breeches, how d’ye like that,” he continued, as the shot from his piece struck the quarter of the flag-ship, knocking the splinters high into the air, and cutting transversely through and through her crowded decks.

Meanwhile the three men-of-war attempting to cut off our communications, had got entangled among the shoals to our right, and now lay utterly helpless, engaged in attempting to get afloat, and unable to fire a gun. Directly two of them ran foul, carrying away the bowsprit of the smaller one.

“Huzza !” shouted the old bruiser again, squinting a moment in that direction; “they’re smashing each other to pieces there without our help, and so here goes at smashing their messmates in front here — what the devil,” he continued, turning smartly around to cuff a powder-boy, “what are you gaping up stream for, when you should be waiting on me? take that, you varmint, and see if you can do as neat a thing as this when you’re old enough to point a gun. By the Lord Harry, I’ve cut away that foretopmast as clean as a whistle.”

Meantime the conflict waxed hotter and hotter, and through the long summer afternoon, except during an interval when we slackened it for want of powder, our brave fellows, with the coolness of veterans, and the enthusiasm of youth, kept up their fire. A patriotic ardor burned along our lines, which only became more resistless, as the wounded were carried past in the arms of their comrades. The contest was at its height, when General Lee arrived from the mainland to offer to remove us if we wished to abandon our perilous position.

“Abandon our position, General ?” said Colonel Moultrie; “will your excellency but visit the guns, and ask the men whether they will give up the fort? No, we will die or conquer here !”

The eye of the commander-in-chief flashed proudly at the reply, and stepping out upon the plain, he approached a party who were firing with terrible precision upon the British fleet. This fearless exposure of his person called forth a cheer from the men; but without giving him time to remain long in so dangerous a position, Colonel Moultrie exclaimed :

“My brave fellows, the general has come off to offer to remove you to the main if you are tired of your post. Shall it be ?”

There was a universal negative, every man declaring he would sooner die at his gun. It was a noble sight. Their eyes flashing; their chests dilated; their brawny arms bared and covered with smoke, they stood there, determined, to a man, to save their native soil at every cost from invasion. At this moment a group appeared, carrying a poor fellow, whom it could be seen at a glance was mortally wounded. His lips were blue; his countenance ghastly; and his dim eye rolled uneasily about. He breathed heavily. But as he approached us, the shouts of his fellow-soldiers falling on his ear,

aroused his dying faculties, and lifting himself heavily up, his eye after wandering inquiringly about, caught the sight of his general.

"God bless you, my poor fellow," said Lee, compassionately "you are I fear seriously hurt."

The dying man looked at him as if not comprehending his remark and then fixing his eye upon his general, said, faintly :

"Did not some one talk of abandoning the fort?"

"Yes," answered Lee; "I offered to remove you or let you fight it out—but I see you brave fellows would rather die than retreat."

"Die!" said the wounded man, raising himself half-upright, with sudden strength, while his eye gleamed with a brighter luster than even in health. "I thank my God that I am dying, if we can only beat the British back. Die! I have no family, and my life is well given for the freedom of my country. No, my men, never retreat," he continued, turning to his fellow-soldiers, and waving his arm around his head, "huzza for li—i—ber—ty—huz—za—a—a," and as the word died away, quivering in his throat, he fell back, a twitch passed over his face, and he was dead.

Need I detail the rest of that bloody day? For nine hours without intermission, the cannonade was continued with a rapidity on the part of our foes, and a murderous precision on that of ourselves, such as I have never since seen equaled. Night did not terminate the conflict. The long afternoon wore away; the sun went down: the twilight came and vanished; darkness reigned over the distant shores around us—yet the flash of the guns, and the roar of the explosions did not cease. As the evening grew more obscure, the whole horizon became illuminated by the fire of our batteries, and the long, meteor-like tracks of the shells through the sky. The crash of spars, the shouts of the men, and the thunder of the cannonade, formed meanwhile a discord as terrible as it was exciting; while the lights flashing along the bay, and twinkling from our encampment at Haddrell's Point, made the scene even picturesque.

Long was the conflict, and desperately did our enemies struggle to maintain their posts. Even when the cable of the flag-ship had been cut away, and swinging around with her stern toward us, every shot from our battery was enabled to traverse the whole length of her decks, amid terrific slaughter, she did not display a sign of fear, but doggedly maintained her position, keeping up a straggling fire upon us, for some time, from such of her guns as could be brought to bear. At length, however, a new cable was rigged upon her, and swinging around broadside on, she resumed her fire. But it was in vain. Had they fought till doomsday, they could not have overcome the indomitable courage of men warring for their lives and liberties; and finding that our fire only grew more deadly at every discharge, Sir Peter Parker at length made the signal to retire. One of the frigates farther in the bay had grounded, however, so firmly on the shoals that she could not be got off; and when she was abandoned and fired next morning, our brave fellows, despite the flames wreathing already around her, boarded her, and fired at the retreating

squadron until it was out of range. They had not finally deserted her more than a quarter of an hour before she blew up with a stunning shock.

The rejoicings among the inhabitants after this signal victory were long and joyous. We were thanked, feted, and became *lions* at once. The tory families, among which was that of Mr. Rochester, maintained, however, a sullen silence. The suspicion which such conduct created, made it scarcely advisable that I should become a constant visitor at his mansion, even if the cold civility of his family had not, as I have stated before, furnished other obstacles to my seeing Beatrice. Mr. Rochester, it was true, had thanked me for the services I had rendered his ward, but he had done so in a manner frigid and reserved to the last degree, closing his expressions of gratitude with an offer of pecuniary recompense, which not only made the blood tingle in my veins, but detracted from the value of what little he had said.

A fortnight had now elapsed since I had seen Beatrice, and I was still delayed at Charleston, waiting for a passage to the north, and arranging the proceeds of our prize, when I received an invitation to a ball at the house of one of the leaders of ton, who affecting a neutrality in politics, issued cards indiscriminately to both parties. Feeling a presentiment that Beatrice would be there, and doubtless unaccompanied by her uncle or cousin, I determined to go, and seek an opportunity to bid her farewell, unobserved, before my departure.

The rooms were crowded to excess. All that taste could suggest, or wealth afford, had been called into requisition to increase the splendor of the *fete*. Rich chandeliers; sumptuous ottomans; lowers of every hue; and an array of loveliness such as I have rarely seen equaled, made the lofty apartment almost a fairy place. But amid that throng of beauty, there was but one form which attracted my eye. It was that of Beatrice. She was surrounded by a crowd of admirers, and I felt a pang of almost jealousy, when I saw her, as I thought, smiling as gayly as the most thoughtless beauty present. But as I drew nearer I noticed that, amid all her affected gayety, a sadness would momentarily steal over her fine countenance, like a cloud flitting over a sunny summer landscape. As I edged toward her through the crowd, her eye caught mine, and in an instant lighted up with a joyousness that was no longer assumed. I felt amply repaid, by that one glance, for all the doubts I had suffered during the past fortnight; but the formalities of etiquette prevented me from doing aught except to return an answering glance, and solicit the hand of Beatrice.

"Oh! why have you been absent so long?" said the dear girl, after the dance had been concluded, and we had sauntered together, as if involuntarily, into a conservatory behind the ball-room, "every one is talking of your conduct at the fort — do you know I too am a rebel — and do you then sail for the north?"

"Yes, dearest," I replied, "and I have sought you to-night to bid you adieu for months — it may be for years. God only knows

Beatrice," and I pressed her hand again to my heart, "when we shall meet again. Perhaps you may not even hear from me; the war will doubtless cut off the communications; and sweet one, say will you still love me, though others may be willing to say that I have forgotten you?"

"Oh! how can you ask me? But you — will — write won't you?" and she lifted those deep, dark, liquid eyes to mine, gazing confidently upon me, until my soul swam in ecstasy. My best answer was a renewed pressure of that small fair hand.

"And Beatrice," said I, venturing upon a topic, to which I had never yet alluded, "if they seek to wed you to another, will you — will you still be mine only?"

"How can you ask so cruel a question?" was the answer, in a tone so low and sweet, yet half reproachful, that no ear but that of a lover could have heard it. "Oh! you know better — you know," she added, with energy, "they have already planned a marriage between me and my cousin; but never, never can I consent to wed where my heart goes not with my hand. And now you know all," she said tearfully, "and though they may forbid me to think of you, yet I can never forget the past. No, believe me Beatrice Derwent where once she has plighted her faith, will never afterward betray it," and overcome by her emotions, the fair girl leaned upon my shoulder and wept long and freely.

But I will not protract the scene. Anew we exchanged our protestations of love, and after waiting until Beatrice had grown composed we returned to the ball-room. Under the plea of illness I saw her soon depart, nor was I long in following. No one however, had noticed our absence. Her haughty uncle, in his luxurious library, little suspected the scene that had that night occurred. But his conduct, I felt, had exonerated me from every obligation to him, and I determined to win his ward, if fortune favored me, in despite of his opposition. My honor was no longer concerned against me: I felt free to act as I choose.

The British fleet meanwhile, having been seen no more upon the coast, the communication with the north, by sea, became easy again. New York, however, was in the possession of the enemy, and a squadron was daily expected at the mouth of Delaware Bay. To neither of these ports, consequently, could I obtain a passage. Nor indeed did I wish it. There was no possibility that the FIRE-FLY would enter either to re-victual, and as I was anxious to join her it was useless to waste time in a port where she could not enter. Newport held out the only chance for me for rejoining my vessel. It was but a day's travel from thence to Boston, and at one or the other of these places I felt confident the FIRE-FLY would appear before winter.

The very day, however, after seeing Beatrice, I obtained a passage in a brig, which had been bound to another port, but whose destination the owners had changed to Newport, almost on the eve of sailing. I instantly made arrangements for embarking in her, having already disposed of our prize, and invested the money, in a manner

which I knew would allow it to be distributed among the crew of the FIRE-FLY at the earliest opportunity. My parting with Col. Moultrie was like parting from a father. He gave me his blessing; I carried my kit on board; and before forty-eight hours I was once more at sea.

CHAPTER V

CAST AWAY.

"STEADY, there, steady!" thundered the master of the merchantman, his voice seeming, however, in the fierce uproar of the gale, to lie away into a whisper.

I looked ahead. A giant wave, towering as high as the yard-arm, its angry crest hissing above us, and its dark-green bosom seeming to open to engulf our fated bark, was rolling down toward us, shutting out half the horizon from sight, and striking terror into the stoutest heart. It was a fearful spectacle. Involuntarily I glanced around the horizon. All was dark, lowering, and ominous. On every hand the mountain waves were heaving to the sky, while the roar of the hurricane was awfully sublime. Now we rose to the heavens; now sunk into a yawning abyss. But I had little time to gaze upon the fearful scene. Already the angry billow was rushing down upon our bows, when the master again sang out, as if with the voice of a giant.

"Hold on all!" and as he spoke, the huge volume of water came tumbling in upon us, sweeping our decks like a whirlwind, hissing, roaring, and foaming along, and making the merchantman quiver in every timber from bulwark to keelson. Not a movable thing was left. The long-boat was swept from the decks like chaff before a hurricane. For an instant the merchantman lay powerless beneath the blow, as if a thunder-bolt had stunned her; but gradually recovering from the shock, she shook the waters gallantly from her bows, emerged from the deluge, and rolling her tall masts heavily to starboard once more breasted the storm.

We had been a week at sea without meeting a single sail. During that time we had enjoyed a succession of favorable breezes, until within the few last days, when the gale, which now raged, had overtaken us, and driven us out into the Atlantic, somewhere, as near as we could guess, between the Bermudas and our port of destination. Within the last few hours we had been lying-to, under a close-reefed foresail, but every succeeding wave had seemed to become more dangerous than the last, until it was now evident that our craft could

not much longer endure the continued surges which breaking over her bows, threatened momentarily to engulf us. The master stood by my side, holding on to a rope, his weather-beaten countenance drenched with spray, but his keen anxious eye changing continually from the bow of his craft, to the wild scene around him.

"She can't stand it much longer, Mr. Parker," said the old man, "many a gale have I weathered in her, but none like this. God help us!"

"Meet it with the helm—hold on all," came faintly from the fore-castle, and before the words had whizzed past upon the gale, another mountain wave was hurled in upon us, and I felt myself, the next instant, borne away, as in the arms of a giant upon its bosom. The rope by which I held had parted. There was a hissing in my ears—a rapid shooting like an arrow—a desperate effort to stay my progress by catching at a rope, I missed—and then I felt myself whirled away astern of the merchantman, my eyes blinded with the spray, my ears ringing with a strange, wild sound, and a feeling of sudden, utter hopelessness at my heart, such as they only can know who have experienced a fate as terrible as mine, at that moment, threatened to be.

"A man overboard!" came faintly from the fast-receding ship

"Ahoy!" I shouted.

"Hillo—hil—lo—o," was answered back.

"Ahoy—a—a—hoy!"

"Throw over that spar."

"Toll the bell that he may know where we are."

"Hillo—hi—il—lo!"

"Who is it?"

"Bring a lantern here."

"Hil—l—o—o—o—o!"

"Can you see him?"

"It's as dark as death."

"God have mercy then upon his soul."

I could hear every word of the conversation, as the excited tones of the speakers came borne to leeward upon the gale, but although I shouted back with desperate strength, I felt that my cries were unheard by my shipmates to windward. The distance between myself and the merchantman was meanwhile rapidly increasing, and every moment her dark figure became more and more shadowy. With that presence of mind which is soon acquired in a life of peril, I had begun to tread water the instant I had gone overboard; but I felt that my strength would soon fail me, and that I must sink, unaided, into the watery abyss. Oh! who can tell my feelings as I saw the figure of the merchantman gradually becoming more dim in the distance, and heard the voices of my friends, at first loud and distinct, dying away into indistinct murmurs. Alone on the ocean! My breath came quick; my heart beat wildly; I felt the blood rushing in torrents to my brain. The scene meanwhile grew darker around me. The faint hope I had entertained that the ship would

be put about, gradually died away; and even while I looked, she suddenly vanished from my vision. I strained my eyes to catch a sight of her as I rose upon the billow. Alas! she was not to be seen. Was there then no hope? Young; full of life; in the heyday of love — O God! it is too much to endure! I felt that my last hour had come. Already the waters seemed roaring through my ears, and strange, fantastic figures to dance before my eyes. In that hour every event of my life whirled through my memory! I thought of my childhood; of my mother in her weeds! of her prayers over her only child; and of the cold wintry day when they laid her in her grave, and told me that I was an orphan. I thought too of my boyhood; of my college life; of my early days at sea; of the eventful months which had just passed; of my hopes of a bright career or a glorious death, thus to be quenched forever; and of Beatrice, my own Beatrice, whom I was to see no more. Wild with the agony of that thought, I tossed my arms aloft, and invoked a dying blessing on her head. At that instant something came shooting past me, borne on the bosom of a towering wave. It was a lumbering chest, doubtless one of those thrown overboard from the merchantman. I grasped it with a desperate effort; I clambered upon it; and as I felt its frail planks beneath me, a revulsion came over my bosom. The fisherman by his fireside, when the tempest howls around his dwelling, could not have felt more confident of safety than I now did, with nothing but this simple chest between me and the yawning abyss. Quick, gushing emotions swept through my bosom; I burst into tears; and lifting up my voice, there, alone, on the wide ocean, I poured forth my thanksgivings to God.

It was with no little difficulty I maintained my position on the chest, during the long hours which elapsed before the morning dawned. Now borne to the heavens, now hurried into the abyss below; now drenched with the surge, now whirled wildly onward, on the bosom of some wave, I passed the weary moments, in alternate efforts to maintain my hold, and ardent longings for the morning's light. The gale, meantime gradually diminished. At length the long looked-for dawn appeared, creeping slowly and ominously over the horizon, and revealing to my eager sight nothing but the white surges, the agitated deep, and the leaden-colored sky on every hand. My heart sank within me. All through the weary watches of that seemingly interminable night, I had cheered my drooping hopes with the certainty of seeing the merchantman in the morning, and now, as I scanned the frowning horizon, and saw only that stormy waste on every hand, my heart once more died within me, and I almost despaired. Suddenly, however, I thought I perceived something flashing on the weather seaboard like the wing of a water-fowl, and straining my eyes in that direction, whenever I rose upon a wave, I beheld at length to my joy, that the object was a sail. Oh! the overpowering emotions of that moment. The vessel was evidently one of considerable size, and coming down right toward me. As she approached I made her out to be a sloop of war, driving under

close-reefed courses before the gale. Her hull of glossy black; her snowy canvas; and her trim jaunty finish were in remarkable contrast with the usual slovenly appearance of a mere merchantman. No jack was at her mast-head; no ensign fluttered at her gaff. But I cared not to what nation she belonged, in that moment of hope and fear. To me she was a messenger of mercy. I had watched her eagerly until she had approached within almost a pistol shot of me, trembling momentarily lest she should alter her course.* I now shouted with all my strength. No one, however, seemed to hear me. Onward she came, swinging with the surges, and driving a cataract of foam along before her bows. A look-out was idly leaning on the bowsprit. As the huge fabric surged down toward me another danger arose. I might be run down. Nerved to supernatural strength by the imminency of the peril, I raised myself half up upon the chest, and placing a hand to my mouth, shouted with desperate energy.

“Ahoy! — a — a — hoy!”

“Hillo!” said the look-out, turning sharply in the direction of my voice.

“Ahoy! a ship *a — h — o — o — y!*”

“Starboard your helm,” thundered the seaman, discovering me upon my little raft, “heave a rope here — easy — easy — God bless you, shipmate,” and with the rapidity with which events are transacted in a dream, I was hoisted on board, and clasped in the arms of a warm-hearted old fellow, before he saw, by my uniform, that I was an officer. When he perceived this, however, he started back, and hastily touching his hat, said, with humorous perplexity.

“Beg pardon, sir — didn’t see you belonged aft — ”

“An American officer in this extremity,” said a deep voice at my elbow, with startling suddenness, and as the speaker advanced, the group of curious seamen fell away from around me, as if by magic; while I felt, at once, that I was in the presence of the commanding officer of the ship.

“You are among friends,” said the speaker, in a voice slightly tinged with the Scotch accent, “we bear the flag of the Congress — but walk aft — you are drenched, exhausted — you need rest — I must delay my inquiries until you have been provided for — send the doctor to my cabin — and steward mix us a rummer of hot grog.”

During these rapid remarks the speaker, taking me by the arm, had conducted, or rather led me to a neat cabin aft, and closing the door with his last remarks, he opened a locker and producing a suit of dry clothes, bid me array myself in them, and then vanished from the apartment.

In a few minutes, however, he reappeared, followed by the steward, bearing a huge tumbler of hot brandy, which he made me drink off nothing loth, at a draught.

From the first instant of his appearance, I had felt a strange, but unaccountable awe in the presence of the commanding officer,

and I now sought to account for it by a rigid, but hasty scrutiny of his person, as he stood before me.

He was a short, thickset, muscular man, apparently about thirty years of age, dressed in a blue, tight-fitting naval frock coat, with an epaulette upon one shoulder, and a sword hanging by his side. But his face was the most striking part of him. Such a countenance I never saw. It had a fire in the eye, a compression about the lips, a distention of the nostrils, and a sternness in its whole appearance, which betokened a man, not only of strong passions, but of inflexible decision of character. That brow — bold, massy, and threatening might have shaped the destinies of a nation. I could not withdraw my eyes from it. He appeared to read my thoughts, for smiling faintly, he courteously signed to the steward to take my glass, and when the door had closed upon him, said,

“But to what brother officer am I indebted for this honor?”

I mentioned my name, and the schooner in which I had sailed from New York.

“The Fire-Fly!” he said, with some surprise; “ah! I have heard of your gallantry in that brush with the pirates —” and then, half unconsciously, as if musing, he continued, “and so your name is Parker?”

“And yours?” I asked, with a nod of assent.

“PAUL JONES!”

For a moment we stood silently gazing on each other — he seeming to wish to pierce my very soul with his small, gray eye, and I regarding, with a feeling akin to fascination, the wonderful man whose after career was even then foreshadowed in my mind.

“I see you are of the right stuff,” exclaimed this singular being, breaking the silence: “we shall yet make those haughty English weep in blood for their tyranny.”

I know not how it was; but from that moment I felt certain my companion would make his name a terror to his enemies and a wonder to the world.

For some days we continued our course, with but little deviation; and every day I became more and more interested in the commander of the man-of-war. Although my situation as his guest brought me into closer contact with him than any one except his lieutenant, yet, after the first few hours of our intercourse, he became reserved and silent, though without any diminution of courtesy. His former career was little known even in the ward-room. He had been brought up, it was said, by the Earl of Selkirk, but had left his patron's house at the age of fifteen, and embarked in a seafaring life. Dark hints were whispered about as to the causes of his sudden departure, and it was said that the dishonor of one of his family had driven him forth from the roof of his patron. Upon these subjects, however, I made no ungenerous inquiries; but learned that he had subsequently been engaged in the West India trade as master, and that he had, on the breaking out of the war, come to America, and offered himself to Congress for a commission in our navy. Some deep, but as yet un-

known, cause of hatred toward the English, was said to have prompted him to this act.

As time passed on, however, I enjoyed many opportunities of studying his singular character, which, had I not felt my curiosity aroused, might have passed by unused. Often would I in our slight conversation, endeavor to pierce into his bosom, and read there the history of all those dark emotions which slumbered there. But he seemed generally to suspect my purpose — at least he appeared always on his guard. He was ever the same courteous but unfathomable being.

We had run down as far south as the Bermudas, when, one day he look-out made five sail; and in an instant every eye was directed toward the quarter where the strangers appeared, to see if there was any chance of a prize.

"How bear they?" asked Paul Jones quickly, to the look-out at the mast-head.

"I can't make out but one, and she seems a large merchantman, on a taut bowline."

"Watch her sharp."

"Ay, ay, sir."

For some time every eye was fastened upon the approaching sail, which, unconscious of an enemy so near, kept blindly approaching us. At length her royals began to lift, her topsails following rapidly, and directly the heads of her courses loomed up on the horizon. Every eye sparkled with the certainty of a rich prize.

"She's a fat Indiaman, by St. George," said our lieutenant, who had not yet so far forgot the country of his ancestors, as to swear by any saint but her patron one.

"I guess we had better not be too sure," said a cautious old quarter-master from Cape Cod, as he leveled a much-worn spy-glass, and prepared to take a long squint at the stranger.

"By St. Patrick," said an Irish midshipman, in a whisper to one of his comrades, "but won't she make a beautiful prize — with the real Jamaica, my boys, by the hogshead in her, and we nothing to do after the capture, but to drink it up, to be sure."

"The strange sail is a frigate," said the look-out at the mast-head, with startling earnestness.

"Too true," muttered the lieutenant, shutting the glass with a jerk; and as he spoke, the hull of the stranger loomed up above the horizon, presenting a row of yawning teeth that boded us little good, for we knew that our own little navy boasted no vessel with so large an armament.

"That fellow is an English frigate," calmly said Paul Jones, closing his telescope leisurely, "we shall have to try our heels."

Every thing that could draw was soon set, and we went off upon a wind, hoping to distance our pursuer by superior sailing. But though, for a while, we deluded ourselves with this hope, it soon became apparent that the enemy was rapidly gaining upon us, and with a heavy cross-sea to contend against, we found ourselves in less

than four hours, within musket-shot of the frigate, upon her weather-bow. During all this time the Englishman had been firing her chase guns after us, but not one of them, as yet, had touched us. The game, however, was now apparently over. Every one gave themselves up as lost, to die, perhaps, the death of rebels. Resistance would only inflame our captors. How astonished then were all to hear the captain exclaim,

“Beat to quarters!”

The high discipline of the crew brought every man to his post at the first tap of the drum, though not a countenance but exhibited amazement at the order.

“Open the magazine!” said Paul Jones in the same stern, collected tone.

The order was obeyed, and all was silent again. It was a moment of exciting interest. As I looked along the deck at the dark groups gathered at the guns, and then at the calm, but iron-like countenance of the daring commander, I felt strange doubts as to whether it might not be his intention to sink beneath the broadside of the frigate, or, grappling with the foe, blow himself and the Englishman up. My reverie, however, was soon cut short by a shot from the frigate whizzing harmlessly past us, overhead. The eye of the singular being standing beside me, flashed lightning, as he thundered, —

“Show him the bunting. Let drive at him, gunner,” and at the same instant our flag shot up to the gaff, unrolled, and whipt in the wind; while a shot from one of our four-pounders, cut through and through the fore-course of the enemy.

“Keep her away a point or two quarter-master,” said the captain, again breaking in upon the ominous silence, now interrupted only by the report of the cannon, or the fierce dashing of the waves against the sloop’s bows.

“Does he mean to have us all strung up at the yard-arm?” whispered the lieutenant to me, as he beheld the perilous bravado, yet felt himself restrained as much by the awe in which he held his superior, as by his own rigid notions of discipline, from remonstrating against the maneuver.

Meantime, the frigate was slowly gaining upon us, and had her batteries been better served, would have soon riddled us to pieces; but the want of skill in her crew, as well as the violence of the cross sea, prevented her shot from taking effect. The distance between us, however, gradually lessened. We saw no hope of escape. Every resort had been tried, but in vain. Already the frigate was dashing on to us in dangerous proximity, and we could see the eager countenances of her officers apparently exulting over their prize. Our crew, meanwhile, began to murmur. Despair was in many faces, despondency in all. Only our commander maintained the same inflexible demeanor which had characterized him throughout the chase. He had kept his eye steadily fixed upon the frigate for the last ten minutes in silence, only speaking now and then to order the

sloop to be kept away another point or two. By this means the relative positions of the two vessels had been changed, so as to bring us upon the lee bow of the enemy. Suddenly his eye kindled, and turning quickly around to his lieutenant, he said, —

“Order all hands to be ready to make sail; and as soon as the men had sprang to their stations, he shouted —

“Up with your helm; hard, — harder. Man the clew gannets — broad tacks — topsails, royals — and flying jib, — merrily all, my men.”

And as sheet after sheet of canvas was distended to the wind, we came gallantly around, and catching the breeze over our taffrail, went off dead before the wind, passing, however, within pistol-shot of the enemy.

“Have you any message for Newport?” said Paul Jones, springing into the mizzen-rigging, and hailing the infuriated English captain, as we shot past him.

“Give it to him with the grape — all hands make sail — fire!” came hoarsely down from the frigate, in harsh and angry tones.

“Good day, and many thanks for your present,” said our imperturbable commander, as the discharge swept harmlessly by; and then leaping upon the deck, he ran his eye aloft.

“Run aft with that sheet — send out the kites aloft there, more merrily — we shall drop the rascals now, my gallant fellows,” shouted the elated captain as we swept like a sea-gull away from the foe, while the men, inspired by the boldness and success of the maneuver, worked with a redoubled alacrity, which promised soon to place us without reach of the enemy’s fire. The desperate efforts of the frigate to regain her advantage, were, meanwhile, of no avail. Taken completely by surprise, she could neither throw out her light sails sufficiently quick, nor direct her fiery broadsides with any precision. Not a grape-shot struck us, although the water to larboard was plowed up with the iron hail. We soon found that we outsailed her before the wind, and in less than an hour we had drawn beyond range of her shot.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MESS-ROOM.

It is scarcely necessary to detail the occurrences of that celebrated cruise. Success appeared to follow us, wherever we went. After our escape from the man-of-war — which we subsequently learned to be the *Solebay*, mounting twenty-eight guns — we ran farther eastward, and soon fell in with several prizes. One morning, however, our look-out detected a strange frigate hovering upon the seaboard, nor was it long before we discovered her to be an enemy. We made her out, by the aid of our glasses, to be a light frigate, pierced for sixteen guns on a side. Every rag that would draw was instantly set. With equal alacrity the stranger followed our example and a running fight was commenced, which lasted nearly the whole day; for our daring leader, finding that we could easily outsail the enemy, kept just out of range of her guns, so that, although she maintained a constant fire, every shot fell short. Toward nightfall, however, we gave full rein to our gallant craft, and, to the astonishment and chagrin of the Englishman, left him hull down in a few hours.

After hauling aboard our tacks, we ran up toward Canseau, and for some time inflicted serious damage upon the enemy's fishermen, around the coast of Nova Scotia. Having finally captured no less than sixteen sail, some of them very valuable, we left the scene of our late exploits, and swept down the coast toward Montauk.

It was a cloudless afternoon when we made Block Island, and, as the sun set behind its solitary outline tinting the sky with a thousand varied dyes and prolonging the shadow of the coast along the deep, we beheld a small schooner, close-hauled, opening around the northern extremity of the island. In less than a half hour she was close to windward of us. As it was the first friendly craft we had seen for weeks, we were all naturally anxious to learn the state of affairs on land. Paul Jones himself leaped into the rigging and hailed:

"Ahoy! what craft is that?"

"The *Mary Ann*, of Newport," answered a nasal voice from the bow deck of the stranger; "what vessel air you?"

"The *Providence Continental* sloop — come to under our lee and send a boat aboard."

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered the same voice, but in an altered tone, and with the ready alacrity of a true seaman; "round her to, boys; but, may be," continued he, again addressing us, "you hain't

needed the news yet. I calculate it'll make the British think we Yankees ain't to be made slaves of arter all — *Independence is declared!*”

“What! the Congress declared itself independent of Great Britain?” asked Paul Jones, quickly.

“Yes, by —,” but the half-muttered oath of the seaman died away in a prolonged whistle, as he remembered how unbecoming an oath would be from a deacon of the Church. For an instant there was a profound silence, while we gazed into each other's faces, with mingled wonder, delight, and pride. The news was not wholly un hoped for, though we had scarcely ventured to expect it. A topman was the first to speak. Forgetting every thing in his enthusiasm, he shouted:

“Three cheers, my boys, for freedom — huzza!”

And, suiting the action to the word, he broke into a thundering shout, which, taken up by our crew, was answered back by that of the schooner, until the very heavens seemed to echo the sound. It was a stirring moment. A universal transport appeared to have seized upon our gallant fellows; they threw up their hats, they shook each other's hands, they laughed, they sang, and the more volatile even danced; while Paul Jones himself, with a flushed cheek and kindling eye, timed the huzzas of his patriotic crew.

Before twenty-four hours we were at anchor in Newport, and almost the first craft that I beheld in the harbor, was the saucy little FIRE-FLY. The welcome I received from my shipmates I will not attempt to describe. Over our cold junk and Jamaica, I listened to the narrative of their adventures since our parting, and rehearsed in return my own. My arrival was opportune, for the schooner expected to sail in less than a week, and had I been delayed many days longer, I might have found it impossible to have rejoined her during the war. The little time that we remained in port after my arrival, was spent in a constant round of amusements, such only as a set of gay reckless reefers know how to indulge in. Many a gay song was trolled, and many a mirthful tale related by lips that have long since been stilled in death.

But what of Beatrice? Had she forgotten me? No — the dear creature had availed herself of one of the rare opportunities which then presented themselves occasionally of communicating with the North, to answer a long epistle I had transmitted to her, by a chance vessel, we met a few days after leaving Charleston. Oh! with what simple, yet nervous eloquence did she assure me of her unabated love, and how sweetly did she chide me for the doubts I had — sinner that I was — whispered respecting it. I kissed the dear missive again and again; I read it over and over a thousand times, I treasured it the more because I knew not when the chances of war would suffer me to hear from her again. I feared not now the influence of her uncle: I felt in my inmost soul that Beatrice was too pure, too self-devoted in her love, ever to sacrifice it for lucre. And as I felt this, it flashed across me that perhaps she

might have heard of my being lost overboard from the merchantman; and who knew but that even now she might be mourning me as dead? Happily a brig was now in port about to sail for Charleston. I seized the opportunity, and wrote to inform Beatrice of my safety.

In a few days our outfit was completed, and bidding adieu to my friends on board the *Providence*, we set sail from Newport. The day was bright and glorious, and the sunbeams danced merrily upon the waves. A light breeze murmured through the rigging; the gay song of the sailors from the merchantmen in port floated softly past; and the scream of the sea-bird sounded shrilly over us, high in the clear blue sky.

As the day advanced, however, a thin gauze-like vapor gradually spread over the horizon, deepening before four bells in the afternoon watch, to an impervious canopy of black, which stretching from pole to pole, obscured the whole firmament, and threw a premature and sickly gloom over the deep beneath. The wind, too, began to rise, blowing in irregular puffs, and whitening the surface of the sea in patches over the whole of its wide extent; while occasionally a low, half-smothered murmur, as if arising out of the very heart of the ocean, betokened that the elements of the storm were at work far down in their wild recesses. As the day advanced, the sky became even more ominous, until long before nightfall its weird-like grandeur excelled anything I had ever beheld. By this time, too, the wind had increased almost into a hurricane, and with every thing trimmed down, we were cleaving through the fast white-ning billows with an exhilarating velocity that only a sailor can appreciate. The rain, meanwhile, was falling fast. As night came on the watch was set, and most of us went below, so that all off duty were soon congregated in our mess-room.

"A wild night," said the last comer, as he shook the wet from his shaggy jacket, "and I see you are determined to make the most of it, my boys — push us the *Jamaica*, Parker, and don't forget the junk in passing. Here's to the thirteen united colonies, hurrah!"

"Hurrah! hurrah! hip — hip — hurrah!" rung round the crowded room, as we drank off our bumpers.

"Can't you give us a toast, O'Shaughnessy?" sang out Westbrook.

"Shure, and what shall it be?" said he, with humorous simplicity. A general roar of laughter followed.

"Any thing, my hearty," said Westbrook, cramming a piece of junk into his mouth as he spoke.

"Arrah, thin, and ye'll not refuse to dhrink the memory of our gallant comrade," said he, looking hard at me, "present this blessed minit, who fought, bled and died at Fort Moultrie — Misther Parker, I mane, boys."

The explosion of laughter which followed this speech, like successive peals of thunder, were enough to lift the deck of the schooner off bodily from overhead. But the most laughable part of all

was the amazement of poor O'Shaughnessy, who, unable to understand this new burst of merriment, looked from one to another in humorous perplexity. As soon however, as the company could compose itself, the toast was drunk amid a whirlwind of huzzas. I rose to return thanks.

"Hear him — hear him," roared a dozen voices. I began :

"Honored as I am gentlemen by this token of — of," but here I was interrupted by the entrance of the purser, who, poking his head through the narrow doorway, said,

"Gentlemen, the captain must be informed of this riot, if it continues."

The purser was a stiff, starch, precise old scoundrel, with a squint in his eye, a nasal twang, and an itching after money beyond even that of Shylock. To make a dollar he would descend to the meanest shifts. But this would not have irritated the mess so much, even though he had at one time or another fleeced every member of it, had it not been his constant practice to inform on such of the tricks inseparable to a set of youngsters as came under his notice. He was, in short, a skulking spy. Added to this, he was continually affecting a strictness of morals, which was more than suspected to be hypocritical.

"And who made you keeper of the skipper's conscience? — eh ! old plunderer," said Westbrook, as he shied a biscuit at the purser's head.

"Really, gentlemen, really — I — I must —"

"Come in, or you'll catch cold in the draught," sung out our reckless comrade, "you're teeth chatter so now you can't talk. Haul him in there, O'Shaughnessy."

Quick as the word the unlucky interloper was dragged in, the door shut, and he stood turning from one to another of our group in speechless amazement. We were all ready for any mischief. The rattling of the cordage overhead, the thunder of the surge, and the deafening whistle of the hurricane, we knew would drown all the uproar we might occasion, and afford us impunity for any offence. Besides, it was no part of his duty to be intruding on our mess, and threatening us with punishment.

"Hope you find yourself at home — take a sociable glass, that's a good fellow — glad to see you among us," sung out as many voices as biscuit after biscuit was sent at the purser's head, while Westbrook, mixing a stiff tumbler of salt and water, proffered it to our victim to drink.

"Spu — spu — gentlemen, spu, I promise you — the utmost penalty of — of the regulations — you shall be mast-headed — disgrated — you shall, so help me God."

"A peanlty ! a penalty ! the worthy man is profane : how shall we punish such immorality ?"

"Cob him," said one.

"Keel-haul him," said another.

"Make him receipt for his bill," roared a third.

"Give him the salt and water," chimed in Westbrook, and the salt and water it was agreed should be the penalty. Three stout reefers held the loathing victim fast, while Westbrook proceeded to administer the draught.

"Gentlemen — I — protest — a — gainst — you shall suffer for this — you shall —"

"Aisy, you spalpeen you, aisy," said O'Shaughnessy, giving the purser a shake.

"Mr. Westbrook I warn you, I warn — you," said the purser raising his voice.

But our comrade was not to be intimidated. Taking the glass in one hand, he placed himself at a proper distance in front of the struggling man, and gravely commenced haranguing him on the enormity of his offence.

"It pains me, indeed, Mr. Sower," and here Westbrook laid his hand upon his heart, "to hear a man of your character use such language as you have been convicted of, especially in the presence of these misguided young reprobates," here there was a general laugh; "example, example, my dear sir, is everything. But the deed is done: the penalty alone remains to be paid. With a heart torn with the most poignant anguish I proceed to execute your sentence."

"Mr. Westbrook, again I warn you — spe — e — u — uh."

But in vain the purser kicked, and struggled, and spluttered. The mess was too much for him. One seized him by the nose, a second forced open his mouth, and Westbrook, with inimitable gravity, apologizing for, and bemoaning his melancholy duty,— as he called it — in the same breath, poured the nauseating draught down the victim's throat, amid roars of laughter.

"D ——— n, I'll make you pay for this — I will — I will," roared the purser, almost choked with rage.

"Open the door and let him run," laughed Westbrook.

The mandate was obeyed, and with one bound the purser sprang out of the mess-room, while his merry persecutors, holding their sides, laughed until the tears ran out of their eyes.

"A song — give us a song, Westbrook!" shouted the one at the foot of the table, as soon as the merriment, ceasing for a while, but renewed again and again, had finally died away.

"What shall it be?" said our jovial messmate, "ah! our own mess-room song, Parker hasn't heard it yet — shove us the jug, for I'm confoundedly dry."

Having taken a long draught, Westbrook hemmed twice, and sang in a fine manly tenor, the following stanzas:—

"Oh! what is so gay as a reefer's life!
 With his junk and Jamaica by him,
 He cares not a fig for the morning's strife
 He seeks but the foe to defy him;
 He fights for his honor and country's laws,
 He fights for the mother that bore him,—
 And the hireling slave of a tyrant's cause
 Will quail, like a coward, before him."

"The deep may unfetter its surges dread,
 The heavens their thunders awaken,
 The tempest howl as it sweeps overhead,—
 He smiles at all danger unshaken;
 With an unblench'd eye, and a daring form,
 He fearlessly gazes before him,
 Though he fall in battle, or sink in the storm,
 His country, he knows, will weep o'er him.

"In her sun-lit valleys are daughters fair
 To greet us from battle returning,
 With their song and smile to banish each care
 By the hearth-fire cheerily burning.
 Oh! who would not fight for beings like these,
 For mothers, for grandsires hoary?
 Like a besom we'll sweep the foe from the seas.
 Or die, in the strife, full of glory."

"Bravo . three times three ! " and the triple sound rolled ~~stun-~~
 ningly from our throats.

"Hark ! wasn't that the boatswain's whistle ? " said I, and for moment we paused in our applause to listen. But the tumult of the storm drowned every thing in its fierce uproar.

"Again, boys — hurrah ! hurrah ! hurrah ! " and the cheer were renewed with redoubled vigor.

"Gentlemen, all hands on deck," said the quarter master, opening the door at this moment.

"Ay ! ay ! sir," was the simultaneous response of every member of the mess, and in less than a minute our late noisy apartment was as quiet as the tomb, and we had each taken his post on deck. Such is discipline.

The spectacle that met our vision as we reached the deck, drove at once all the excitement of our potations off ; and we were as calm and collected in a second after leaving the gangway, as if we had kept above during the whole evening. Never can I forget that moment. The rain was pouring down in torrents, not perpendicularly, however, but slant-wise, as it was driven before the hurricane. Now it beat fiercely into our faces, and now was whirled hither and thither in wild commotion. Around, all was dark as pitch. We could not see a dozen fathoms in any direction, except where the white crests of the surges flashed through the gloom. These could, however, be detected close under our lee glancing through the darkness, while the dull continued roar in that quarter, betokened our immediate vicinity to breakers. They were, in fact, close aboard. Had they not been detected the instant they were, we should have run on to them the next minute, and perished to a soul. Happily we had just room to wear. This had been done before we were summoned on deck. We had now close-hauled every thing, and were endeavoring, as our only hope, to claw off the shore.

The next fifteen minutes were spent in that agonizing suspense, far more terrible than death itself, which men experience when the king of terrors smiles grimly in their faces, and yet withholds the blow. As we gazed out, through the driving rain, upon the dimly

seen breakers on our starboard beam, and heard their wild monotonous roar as of hounds yelling for their prey, a sense of inexpressible awe stole upon our minds, which, though totally devoid of fear, was yet appalling. Who knew but that, before another hour, ay! before a quarter of that time, our mangled bodies might be floating at the mercy of the surge? Every moment deepened our anxiety, for though our little craft breasted the waves with gallant determination, sending the spray as high as her mast-head at every plunge, yet there was no perceptible increase in our distance from the shore. Fierce, and fiercer, meanwhile, grew the tempest. The surge roared under our lee; the wind howled by like the wailings of the damned, and the occasional lightning, which now began to illuminate the scene, lit up the whole firmament a moment with their ghastly glare, and then left it shrouded in darkness deeper than that of the day of doom. At intervals the thunder bellowed overhead or went crackling in prolonged echoes down the sky. The schooner groaned and quivered in every timber. Now we rose to the heavens; now wallowed in the abyss. The men, grasping each a rope, looked ominously at the scene around, or cast hurried glances aloft, as if fearful that our masts would not stand the strain.

“Hark!” said Westbrook, who stood beside me, “was not that a gun? — there again?”

As he spoke the sullen roar of a cannon boomed across the deep, and for several minutes, in the intervals of the thunder, followed the same awful sound. We looked at each other.

“They are signals of distress,” I ejaculated, “God have mercy on the sufferers! for man can afford them no help.”

I had scarcely ceased speaking when a succession of rapid vivid flashes of lightning, illumined the stormy prospect for several minutes, as with the light of day; and for the first time we caught a glimpse of the rocky coast, on our lee, against which the surge was breaking in a hurricane of foam. But fearful as was the spectacle of our own danger, it was surpassed by the sight which met our eager gaze. About a cable’s length ahead, and a few points on our lee-bow, was a tall and gallant bark, dismantled and broached to, upon a reef of jagged rocks now buried in foam. Her weather-quarter lay high upon the ledge, and was crowded with unfortunate human beings, — men, women, and children, — over whom the surges broke momentarily in cataracts. I hear now their wild despairing cries, although years have passed since then. I see their outstretched hands as they call on heaven for mercy. I feel again the cold chill, freezing up my very blood, which then rushed across my heart, as I thought of their inevitable doom, and knew not but that in a few moments I should share its bitterness with them. I was startled by a deep voice at my side. It was that of an old warrant-officer. The tears were streaming down his weather-beaten cheeks, and his tones were husky and full of emotion as he said,

“It’s a sad spectacle that for a father, Mr. Parker?”

“It is, Hawser — but why do you shed tears? — cheer up, man, — it’s not all over with us yet,” said I.

"Ah! sir, it's not fear that makes me so, but I was thinking what my little ones, and their poor mother would do for bread to eat, should I be taken away from them. You are not a father, Mr. Parker."

"God forgive me, Hawser, for my suspicion. I honor your emotions," said I, pressing his horny hand, and turning away to conceal my own feelings. But as I did so, I felt something hot fall upon my finger. It was the old man's tear.

"We must give her another reef, I fear," said the captain, as he saw how fearfully the vessel strained; "no, no," he added, as he glanced again at the rocky coast, "it will never do. Keep her to it," he thundered, raising his voice, "keep her to it, quarter-master."

"Ay, ay, sir."

We were now almost abreast of the ill-fated wreck. Driving rapidly along, the dark waters sinking in foam beneath our lee as we breasted the opposing surge, our fate promised soon to be the same with that of the wretches on the reef. The crisis was at hand. We were in dangerous proximity to the dismantled ship; and the least falling off would roll us in upon her. It was even doubtful whether we could weather the reef, should we still hold our own. At this moment a ray of hope appeared. We perceived that the shore shelved in just beyond the wreck, and that, if we could escape the ledge, our safety would be insured. The captain took in at a glance this new situation of affairs, which, by holding out hope, redoubled every motive to action.

"How bears she?" he anxiously inquired.

The man answered promptly.

"Hard up — press her down more," he shouted, and then muttered, between his teeth, "or we are lost."

"She is almost shaking."

"How does she bear?"

"A point more in the wind's eye."

"Harder yet, harder."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"How now!"

"Another point, sir."

The crisis had now come. Bending almost to the horizon, under the enormous press of her canvas, the schooner groaned and struggled against the seas, and for one moment of intense agony, during which we held our breaths painfully, and even forgot the cries of the sufferers upon our lee, we thought that all was over, but, although the schooner staggered under the successive shocks, she did not yield, and as the last billow sank away, whitening beneath her lee, and we rose gallantly upon its crest, the rocky reef shot away astern, and we were safe. As the wreck vanished in the gloom behind, the cries of her despairing passengers came mingled with the roar of the tempest, in awful distinctness, to our ears.

CHAPTER VII

THE SEA-FIGHT.

"SAIL ho!" sung out the look-out, one sunny afternoon, as we bowed along before a pleasant gale. In an instant the drowsiest among us was fully awake. The officers thronged the quarter-decks; the foretopman eagerly scanned the horizon; the skulkers stole out from beneath the bulwarks where they had been dozing, and the late quiet decks of the schooner, which but a moment since lay hushed in the drowsy silence of a sultry afternoon, now swarmed with noisy and curious gazers.

"Where away?" asked the officer of the deck.

"Broad on the weather-beam."

"Can you make her out?"

"A heavy square-rigged vessel."

"Do her royals lift?"

"Ay, sir; but only this moment."

"How does she bear?"

"West and by west-sou'west."

"A West Indiaman, perhaps."

"Ay, sir, I can see her to'-gallants now; they belong to a heavy craft."

"Pipe all hands to make sail, boatswain."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"The strange sail is hauling up in to the wind," sung out the look-out.

"Ay — take the glass, Mr. Parker, and spring into the cross-trees to see what you can make of her. All hands aloft — loose and sheet home fore and main topsails. Merrily, there. How does she look, Mr. Parker?"

"She seems a heavy merchantman by her rig; ah! now her topsails lift, large and square, with a cross in them. It's not the rig of a man-o'-war."

"Ease off the sheet — man the lee-braces — hard down the helm."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the quarter-master, as he whirled around the wheel, and the gallant craft danced lightly up in the wind, like a racer beneath the spur, while the men stood at their respective stations eagerly waiting the command.

"Round there, with the foretopsail — haul in fore and aft — belay all!" came in quick succession from the quarter-deck, as we bowed

before the breeze, and dashing the spray on either side our cutwater, went off almost dead in the wind's eye. The sharp wind, as it sang through our cordage, and the momentary dashing of the sea across our bows, as we thumped against the surges, afforded a pleasant relief to the occasional creaking of the shrouds, or the dull monotonous sounds of the water washing lazily alongside, which we had been listening to for the last hour. The change had an exhilarating effect upon our spirits, which was perceptible as well among officers as among men. Besides, we were all eager for a prize. Every man, therefore, was at his station, and a hundred eager faces looked out from the forecastle, the tops, or wherever their owners chanced to be. The captain, too, was upon deck, scanning the stranger with a scrutinizing eye.

"Can you see her hull yet, Mr. Parker?" he asked.

"No, sir — her courses show to the very foot — but here it comes — six ports on a side, sir, though they look like painted ones."

"She's setting her light sails."

"Every one of them, sir: and wetting down their mainsail."

"How are her decks?"

"Crowded, sir. There's the glancing of a musket as I live; ah, of a dozen. She carries troops, sir, I fancy."

"A transport?"

"Ay, sir!"

The interest had gone on deepening, during these rapid questions and answers, until at my last reply a suppressed buzz ran around the ship. No one spoke, but each looked into his messmate's face, and it was obvious that the question, "could we capture our opponents, or would we ourselves become the prey?" was uppermost in every mind. But the person most interested in the event was apparently the least concerned of any; and without moving a muscle of his face, the captain leisurely closed his glass, and turning, with a smile, to his lieutenant, said,—

"We shall be likely to have a sharp brush, Mr. Lenox; in fact our men are getting rusty, and we want something of a close-contested battle to burnish them up. We shall open the magazine, and go to quarters directly."

Every thing that could be made to draw, was by this time set, and we were eating into the wind after the stranger with a rapidity that promised even to the most sanguine of us a speedy realization of our hopes. As we gained upon the merchantman, the crowded state of his decks became more and more apparent, and we could plainly detect, by means of our glasses, that every exertion, even to wetting down the sails to the royals, was being made on board of him to escape. But all was in vain. Few vessels afloat could beat us on the tack we were now going, nor was it long before we had the chase within range of our long Tom.

"She has't shown her bunting as yet," said Captain Stuart. "but we'll throw a shot across her; run up our flag, and see what answer she makes."

The long gun was cast loose, the foot of the foresail lifted, and the gunner applying the match, the ball went whizzing on its way; while at the same moment our flag was run up to the gaff, and blowing out to leeward, disclosed the arms of our colony. For a few minutes the shot might have been seen ricochetting along the waves, until it plunged into the sea a few fathoms on the larboard of the stranger. Still, however, no ensign was shewn by the chase.

"Pitch a shot into her this time, Mr. Matchlock," ejaculated the skipper, addressing the gunner, "and see if that will bring her out."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the old fellow, squinting along his piece, and aware that he was one of the best marksmen afloat in any service, "Ay, ay, we'll awake them to a sense of their condition presently; we'll drive the cold iron through and through the reprobates; too high, a little more starboard — steadily all, and mark the mischief," cried the old fellow, applying the match. The rest of the sentence was lost in the deafening report of the cannon; a sheet of fire was seen streaming out an instant from the mouth of the piece; and as the pale white smoke sailed slowly eddying away to leeward, the old gunner might have been discerned, bending eagerly forward, and shading his eyes with his hands, as he gazed after the path of the ball.

"By the the Lord Harry, how it makes the splinters fly!" said the old fellow, as the shot, striking full on the quarter of the chase, went through and through her deck.

"And there goes her flag at last," said Westbrook, as the ensign of England floated from the quarter of the merchantman, while at the same moment a cloud of smoke puffed from his stern, and a shot, skimming along the deep, toward us, plunged into the waters a cable's length ahead.

"We're beginning to make him talk, eh!" chuckled the gunner, working warm in his work, "Let him have it again — ah! that will bring out his teeth — give it to 'em, you old sea-dog," he continued, familiarly patting his piece, "and by the Continental Congress, he's got it among his sky-scrappers. There come his to'-gallant sails — hurrah!"

The fight now became one of intense interest, for the merchantman perceiving that escape was impossible, seemed determined to resist to the last, and kept up a brisk and well-directed fire upon us from his stern guns. Their range not being, however, so great as that of our piece, we were enabled after a while to regulate our distance so as to cripple the chase effectually without sustaining any damage ourselves. But it was not long that we were suffered to maintain the combat on our own terms. Worried beyond endurance by the havoc made among his spars, the chase soon put his helm up, wore round, and hauling up his courses in gallant defiance, came boldly down toward us.

"We shall have it now," whispered Westbrook as he stood by the division where he commanded, "they must outnumber us two to one — but we'll give them a lesson for all that."

“Ay! hand to hand, and foot to foot, will be the struggle, and God defend the right.”

No sooner had the chase altered his course, and shown a determination to accept our challenge, than the firing on both sides ceased, and the two ships steadily but silently approached each other.

The chase had approached almost within musket-shot, and yet no demonstration of an attack had been made. We could see that the chase was alive with men. From every port, and look-out, and top, a score of faces warned us of a bloody battle. Each man was at his post, determination stamped on his countenance. As I gazed upon this formidable array of numbers, and beheld the comparatively gigantic hull of our adversary, steadily advancing on us, like some portentous monster of the deep, I almost trembled for our victory; but when my eyes fell again on the brawny chests, and determined visages of our gallant crew, I felt that nothing but extermination could prevent them from hoisting our own flag above the proud ensign of our foe which now flapped lazily in the breeze. But my reverie — if such it might be called — was cut short by perceiving a sheet of flame rolling along the Englishman's side, and, while his tall spars reeled backward with the recoil, a shower of shot came hurtling toward us. In an instant the gaff of our main-sail fell; our sails were perforated in various places; and a cannon-ball striking us amidship cut through both bulwarks, and laid one poor fellow dead upon the deck. The men started like hounds when they see their prey.

“Stand to your guns — my men!” thundered the captain in this emergency, “let not a shot be fired until I give the word. Bear steadily on your helm, and lay us across their bows.”

The moments that elapsed before this endeavor could be consummated seemed to be protracted into an age. Our gallant fellows could, meanwhile, scarcely be restrained within the bounds of discipline. As shot after shot came whizzing over us, the crew grew more and more restive, casting uneasier glances at our commander at every successive fire. Several of the spars had by this time been wounded, and our hull showed more than one evidence of the foe's skill in gunnery. At length a shot came tearing through the bulwark but a short distance from where I was stationed, and after knocking the splinters wildly hither and thither, struck a poor fellow at his quarters, and laid him mangled and bleeding across his gun. I ran to him. One of his shipmates had already lifted the man's head up, and laid him carefully in the lap of a comrade. The face was dreadfully pale — the features unnaturally distorted. Agony, intense and irresistible, was written in every line of the face. The motion, however, revived him, and he opened his eyes with a groan. Unsettled as was their gaze, they took in the anxious group around him. He saw, on every face, the deepest commiseration. His glazing eye lighted for a moment.

“How are you, Jack?” said the sailor, in whose lap he lay. The dying man shook his head mournfully.

"Don't you know me, Jack?" said his messmate. There was no answer. The eyes of the sufferer were closed. "God knows I little thought you were to die thus!" continued his shipmate, with emotion. "For twenty years, in gale and calm, in winter and summer we have sailed together, and now you're going to part company, without being able to bid an old messmate farewell, and he wiped the cold sweat from the dying man's brow. "Jack, Jack, don't you know me? Can I do nothing for you?"

The sufferer opened his eyes, and made a gesture as if he wished to be lifted up. His desire was gratified. He looked around eagerly until his eyes fell upon the enemy.

"Bury — me," he faintly articulated, "after you've — hauled — down her flag. And — and Rover," and his voice for an instant became stronger, "send the prize-money to the old woman — and — a — a." He gasped for breath.

"What? — in God's name what?" But the senses of the dying man began to wander.

"Speak! — Jack — for the love of God!"

"A — alls — we — e — ll!" murmured the man, brokenly. He ceased. A quivering motion passed across his face. His shipmates gently laid his head upon the deck.

"He's dead — and now boys, for revenge!" said Rover, as he started to his feet.

The crisis had come. So rapidly had the foregoing scene passed, and so intently had we all been gazing upon the dying man, that, in the interval, the schooner had gained a position on the bow of the enemy, and as the sturdy seaman rose up from beside his slain companion we ran short across her in a raking position; and before the words had died upon the air, the long-expected command came from the quarter-deck, to open our fire.

"Fire!" shouted our leader, "one and all — pour it into them — remember you fight for your all!"

"Give it to'em, my boys," thundered the gunner, "that's it, there goes her spritsail-yard — hurrah!"

It was a terrific scene. No sooner had the signal been given, than, as with one accord, our gallant fellows poured in their deadly fire. Every shot told. Stung almost beyond human endurance by the restraint in which they had been kept and maddened by the spectacle of a messmate slain at his post before he could fire a shot, our crew fought like demons rather than men, jerking their guns out as if they were playthings in their hands. Nothing could withstand them. Not a shot was wasted on the rigging of the foe: every one was driven along her crowded decks. The slaughter was immense. Man and boy, sailor and marine, officers and crew went down before that murderous, incessant fire. The flashes of the cannon, the roar of the batteries, the crashing of spars, and the shrieks of the wounded and the dying, rose up together in terrific discord. Meanwhile the thick clouds of smoke settling down upon us, hid the hull of the enemy completely from sight. Nothing but her masts, rising tall and gallant

ly above the dim canopy of her decks, could be seen. Directly one of these was seen to stagger, then it swayed to and fro a moment; and directly giving a lurch, the whole lofty fabric of spars and hamper went tumbling over her side.

“Hurrah, boys! we have her now,” shouted the captain of a gun near me, “there goes her foremast — let her have it again,” and jerking out his piece at the word, another deadly discharge of grape was sent hurling along the enemy’s decks.

By this time the two vessels had got afoul, the bowsprit of the foe having become entangled with the shrouds of our mainmast. The captain did not hesitate a moment. Waving his sword aloft he thundered:

“Boarders ahoy! muster at the main — to beat back the enemy,” and then in a lower tone he added, “charge the long gun to the muzzle with grape —”

Obedient at the word our gallant fellows hurried to their stations, and stood eagerly awaiting the onset of the foe; who having, by this time, mustered on the fore part of their craft, stood ready to spring upon our decks at the first opportunity. That was now at hand. The two ships, which had momentarily receded, now rolled together, and every man of the enemy’s crew strained his muscles to their utmost tension, as he prepared to spring on our decks.

Never shall I forget that sight. Clustered around the fore-shrouds and on the cat-head, and covering the whole space between, were the dense masses of the enemy, their dark frowning countenances, and glittering weapons forming prominent objects in the spectacle. They had sprung up, as if by magic, from a score of lurking-places, and gathering at the call of their commander, now stood with threatening numbers about to leap upon us. To resist such a whirlwind of cutlasses with our little crew was well nigh madness. But our leader had already determined to make their very numbers the cause of their ruin. At this moment, when the two ships approached each other, he turned rapidly to the gunner, and shouted:

“Give it to them with the long gun — fire!”

The effect was electric. With a noise, like the bursting of a volcano, the instrument of death went off, belching forth its fiery torrent with resistless fury. An avalanche could not have swept off its victims more ruthlessly than did that discharge disperse the foe. Nothing could withstand that hurricane of grape. Its effect was awful. Clearing a lane through and through the crowd upon the forecastle of the enemy, it tore its passage onward amid the spars and hamper of the ship with resistless violence, almost drowning the shrieks of the dying, and the curses of the wounded in its terrific crash. The enemy’s boarders staggered and fell back, and before they could rally the two ships fell asunder. While they were still wavering, our hamper became disentangled, and we once more floated free of the enemy. As we passed along her side our fire was renewed with redoubled impetuosity, while the Englishman, crippled as he was by our last frightful discharge, could only feebly reply.

"Pour it in, my lads," shouted the gunner again, "and we'll soon bring her to quarters — give it to 'em now, for the honor of old Plymouth."

"God save the king;" came hoarsely back from the enemy. "blow the rebels out of water."

The speaker was standing just abaft the mainmast, and had distinguished himself, during the attempt to board us, by his vehement gestures, and apparent influence over the men. I noticed that the eye of Westbrook watched him keenly as he spoke. Suddenly an officer approached and gave him an order. He looked around, started from his protected situation, and dashed up the main-shroud with the intention, as we now perceived, of reeving a rope which had been shot away, and the loss of which prevented the maintop-sail from being hoisted to the cap.

"They're about to make off," said I to Westbrook, "he's a daring fellow to go aloft in this fire, any how."

"He's not so sure of success," said Westbrook, "for they'll have a shot at him from the fore-castle."

The man had by this time, with almost inconceivable rapidity, effected his purpose, although more than one musket had been fired at him from our craft. He now turned to descend, but proud of his achievement, he could not resist the temptation of a momentary bravado. He took off his hat and gave a hurrah.

"It's your last boast," coolly said Westbrook, as he snatched a musket, and lifting it to his shoulder, glanced his eye along the barrel, and fired. I shuddered involuntarily, even though an enemy was the victim, for I knew Westbrook's deadly aim. My presage was true. The man staggered on his footing an instant; made an abortive grasp at the air instead of a rope; and falling backward, struck the shrouds, and rebounded into the sea. He squatted a moment on the water like a wounded duck, and then sunk forever, leaving only a small dark stain of blood upon the wave to tell where he disappeared.

By this time the fire of the enemy had almost ceased, and, even amid the smoke of battle, we could see that her scuppers were literally running with blood. An ineffectual attempt was now made to escape from us, but we ran down upon the enemy at the first symptom, and recommenced our fire with unabated fury. Their rigging was soon terribly cut up, as we now aimed principally at that. As a few moments removed all possibility of an escape on the part of the Englishman, and as we had suffered ourselves in our hamper somewhat from his fire, we then ran off a short distance, and began to repair our damages. An hour and a half sufficed to place us in nearly as good a condition as before going into battle, when running down upon the enemy we once more opened our battery. The first gun, however, had hardly been fired, before the British ensign, which had doggedly been kept flying, was hauled down. I was dispatched to board the capture. As I stepped upon her decks a scene of desolation met my eye. My path was literally slippery with

blood. Scarcely a man was on deck. The helmsman, a single officer, two marines, and a few common seamen, were the only ones, of all that numerous crew, who were not wounded or dead. God knows a more terrific slaughter I had never participated in! I think I behold it at this day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHIP'S BOY.

"Hillo!" said Westbrook, "who's skulking here?" and he pushed his foot against a dark heap, huddled up under the shade of one of the guns. As he did so, a slight, pale-faced, sickly-looking boy started up. "Ah! it's you, Dick, is it? — why I never before thought you'd skulk — there, go — but you musn't do it again my lad."

The boy was a favorite with all on board. He had embarked at Newport, and was, therefore, a new hand, but his quiet demeanor, as well as a certain melancholy expression of face he always wore, had won him a way to our hearts. Little was known of his history, except that he was an orphan. Punctual in the discharge of his duties, yet holding himself aloof from the rest of the boys, he seemed to be one, who although he had determined to endure his present fate, was yet conscious of having seen better days. I was the more confirmed in my belief that he had been born to a higher station, from the choice of his words in conversation, especially with his superiors. His manner, too, was not that of one brought up to buffet roughly against fortune. That one so young should be thrust, unaided, out into the world, was a sure passport for him to my heart, for his want of parents was a link of sympathy uniting us together; and we had, therefore, always been as much friends as the relative difference of our situations, on board of a man-of-war would allow. Yet even I, — so great was his reserve — knew little more of his history than the rest of my shipmates. Once, indeed, when I had rendered him some little kindness, such as an officer always has it in his power without much trouble to himself, to bestow upon an inferior, his heart had opened, and he had told me, more by hints though than in direct words, that he had lost his father and mother and a little sister, within a few weeks of each other, and that, houseless, penniless, and friendless, he had been forced to sea by his only remaining relatives, in order that he might shift for himself. I suspected that he did not pass under his real name. But whatever had been his former lot, or however great were his sufferings, he never repined. He went through

his duties silently, but sadly, as if — poor child! — he carried within him a breaking heart.

"Please, sir," said he, in reply to Westbrook's address, "it's but a minute any how I've been here."

"Well, well, Dick, I believe you," said the warm-hearted midshipman. "But there go eight bells, and as your watch is up, you may go below. What! crying — fie, fie, my lad, how girl-hearted you have grown."

"I'm not girl-hearted always," sobbed the little fellow, looking up into his superior's face, "but I couldn't help crying when I thought that to-night, a year ago, my mother died, and I crept under the gun so that no one might see and laugh at me, as they do at every one here. It was just at this hour she died," he continued, chokingly, bursting into a fit of uncontrollable weeping, "and she was the only friend I had on earth."

"Poor boy! God bless you!" said Westbrook, mentally, as the lad, finishing his passionate exclamation, turned hastily away.

It was my watch, and as Westbrook met me coming on deck, he paused a moment, and said,

"Do you know any thing about that poor little fellow, I mean Dick Rasey? God help me I've been rating him for skulking, when the lad only wanted to hide his grief for his mother from the jests of the crew. I wouldn't have done it for any thing."

"No — he has always maintained the greatest reserve respecting himself. Has he gone below?"

"Yes! who can he be? It's strange I feel such an interest in him."

"Poor child! — he has seen better days, and this hard life is killing him. I wish he could distinguish himself some how — the skipper might then take a fancy to him and put him on the quarter-deck."

"What a dear little middy he would make," said Westbrook, his gay humor flashing out through his sadness, "why we haven't got a cocked-hat aboard that wouldn't bury him up like an extinguisher, or a dirk to spare which isn't longer than his whole body."

"Shame, Jack — it's not a matter for jest. the lad is dying by inches."

"Ah! you're right, Parker; I wish to heaven the boy had a birth aft here. But now I must go below, for I'm confoundedly sleepy. You'll have a lighter watch of it than I had. The moon will be up directly — and there, by Jove! she comes — look how gloriously her disk slides up behind that wave. But this is no time for poetry, for I'm as drowsy as if I was about to sleep, like the old fellow in the Arabian story, for a matter of a hundred years or more, or even like the seven sleepers of Christendom, who fell into a doze some centuries back, and will come to life again the Lord knows when," and with a long yawn, my mercurial messmate gave a parting glance at the rising luminary, and went below.

The spectacle to which Westbrook had called my attention was in

deed a glorious one. The night had been somewhat misty, so that the stars were obscured, or but faintly visible here and there; while the light breeze that scarcely ruffled the sea, or sighed above a whisper in the rigging, had given an air of profound repose to the scene. When I first stepped on deck the whole horizon was buried in this partial obscurity, and the view around excepting in the vicinity of the Fire-Fly, was lost in misty indistinctness. A few moments, however, had changed the aspect of the whole scene. When I relieved the watch the eastern horizon was shrouded in a veil of dark, thick vapors — for the mist had collected there in denser masses than anywhere else — while a single star, through a rent in the midst of that weird-like canopy, shone calmly upon the scene: but now the fog had lifted up like a curtain from the seaboard in that quarter, and a long, greenish streak of light, stretching along for several points, and against which the dark waves undulated in bold relief, betokened the approach of the moon. Even as Westbrook spoke, the upper edge of her disk slid up above the watery horizon, disappearing and appearing again as the surges rose and fell against it, until gradually the huge globe lifted its whole vast volume above the seaboard, and while the edge of the dark canopy above shone as if lined with pearl, a flood of glorious light, flickering and dancing upon the billows, was poured in a long line of molten silver across the sea toward us, bathing hull, and spars, and sails, in liquid radiance, and seeming to transpose us in a moment into a fairy land. Such a scene of unrivalled beauty I had never beheld. The contrast betwixt the dark vapors hanging over the moon, and the dazzling brilliancy of her wake below was indeed magnificent. I looked in mute delight. The few stars above were at once obscured by the brighter glories of the moon. Suddenly, however, as I gazed, a dark speck appeared upon the surface of the moon, and in another instant the tall masts and exquisite tracery of a ship could be seen, in bold relief against her disk, the fine dark lines of the hamper seeming like the thinnest cobwebs crossing a burnished shield of silver. So plainly was the vessel seen, that her minutest spars were perceptible as she rose and fell gallantly on the long heavy swell.

“Ah! my fine fellow,” I exclaimed, “we have you there. Had it not been for yonder pretty mistress of the night, you would have passed us unseen. Make all sail at once — and bear up a few points more, so as to get the weather-gage of the stranger.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

“How gallantly the old schooner eats into the wind,” I said, gazing with admiration on our light little craft. I turned to the chase. “Has the stranger altered her course?” I asked, looking for her in the old position, but finding she was no more visible.

“No, sir, I saw her but an instant ago: oh! there she is — that fog bank settling down on the seaboard hid her from sight. You can see her now just to leeward of the moon, sir.”

I looked, and as the man had said, perceived that the dark, massy bank of vapors, which had lifted as the moon rose, was once

more settling down on the seaboard, obscuring her whole disk at intervals, and shrouding every thing in that quarter in occasional gloom. For a moment the strange sail had been lost in this obscurity, but as the moon struggled through the clouds, it once more became visible just under the northern side of that luminary. Apparently unconscious of our vicinity the stranger was stealing gently along under easy sail, pitching upon the long, undulating swell, while, as he lay almost in the very wake of the moon, every part of his hull and rigging was distinctly perceptible. Not a yard, however, appeared to have been moved: not an additional sail was set. Occasionally we lost sight of him as the moon, wading heavily through the somber clouds, become momentarily obscured, although even then, from beneath the frowning canopy of vapors above, a silvery radiance would steal out of the edges of the clouds, tipping the masts and sails of the stranger with a soft, pearly light that looked like enchantment itself, and which, contrasted with the dark hues of the hull and the gloomy deep beneath, produced an effect such as I had never seen surpassed in nature or art.

At length the moon became wholly obscured. A few stars only could be seen flickering fainter and fainter far up in the fathomless ether, and finally, after momentarily appearing and disappearing, they vanished altogether. A profound gloom hung on all around. The silence of death reigned over our little craft. Even the customary sounds of the swell rippling along our sides, or the breeze sighing through the hamper faded entirely, and save an occasional creaking of the boom, or the sullen falling of a reef-point against the sail, not a sound broke the repose of the scene. The strange sail had long since been lost sight of to starboard. So profound was the darkness that we could scarcely distinguish the look-out at the fore-castle from the quarter-deck. Silent and motionless we lay, shut in by that dark shroud of vapor, as if buried by some potent enchanter in a living tomb.

"Hist!" said a reefer of my watch to me, "don't you hear something, Mr. Parker?"

I listened attentively, and though my hearing was proverbially sharp, I could distinguish nothing for several moments. At length, however, the little fellow pinched my arm, and inclining my eye to the water, I heard a low, monotonous sound like the smothered rollicking of oars that had been muffled. At first I could not credit my senses, but, as I listened again, the sound came more distinctly to my ears, seeming to grow nearer and nearer. There could be no mistaking it. Directly, moreover, these sounds ceased, and then was heard a low murmured noise, as if human voices were conversing together in stifled tones. At once it flashed upon me that an attack was contemplated upon us — by whom I knew not — though it was probable that the enemy came from the strange sail to starboard. It was evident, however, that the assailants were at fault. My measures were taken at once. Hastily ordering the watch to arm themselves in quiet, I ordered the men to be called silently; and, by

this time the look-outs began to detect the approach of our unknown visitors, I enjoined equal silence upon them, commanding them at the same time, however, to keep a sharp eye to starboard, in order to learn, if possible, the exact position of the expected assailants.

In a few minutes the men were mustered, and prepared for the visitors, whether peaceful or not. Most of the officers, too, had found their way on deck, although, as it was uncertain as yet whether it might not be a false alarm, I had not disturbed the skipper. Westbrook was already, however, prepared for the fight, and as I ran my eye hastily over the crew, I thought I saw the slight form of Dick Rasey, standing among them.

"Can you hear any thing, Westbrook?" said I.

"It's like the grave!" was his whispered answer.

"Pass the word on for the men to keep perfectly quiet, but to remain at their stations."

"Ay, ay, sir."

For some minutes the death-like silence which had preceded the discovery of our unknown visitors returned, and as moment after moment crept by without betraying the slightest token of the vicinity of the assailants, I almost began to doubt my senses, and believe that the sound I had heard had been imaginary. The most profound obscurity meantime reigned over our decks. So great was the darkness that I could only distinguish a shadowy group of human beings gathered forward, without being able to discern distinctly any one face or figure; while the only sound I heard, breaking the hush around, was the deep, but half-suppressed breathing of our men. Suddenly, however, when our suspense had become exciting even to nervousness, a low, quick sound was heard right off our starboard quarter, as if one or more boats, with muffled oars, were pulling swiftly on to us while almost instantaneously a dark mass shot out of the gloom on that side, and before we could realize the rapidity of their approach, the boat had struck our side, and her crew were tumbling in over the bulwarks, cutlass in hand. Our preparation took them, however, by surprise, and for a moment they recoiled, but instantly rallying at their leader's voice, they poured in upon us again with redoubled fierceness, cheering as they clambered up our sides, and struggled over the bulwarks.

"Beat them back, Fire-Flies!" I shouted, "give it to them with a will, boys — strike."

"Press on, my lads, press on — the schooner's our own!" shouted the leader of the assailants.

Leveling my pistol at the advancing speaker and waving our men on with my sword, I gave him no answer, but fired. The pistol flashed in the pan. In an instant the leader of the foe was upon me, having sprung over the bulwarks as I spoke. He was a tall, athletic man, and lifting his sword high above his head, while in his other hand he presented a pistol toward my breast, he dashed upon me. I parried his thrust with my blade, but as he fired I felt a sharp pain in my arm like the puncture of a pin. I knew that I was wounded, but it only inspired me with fiercer energy. I made a

lunge at him, but he met it with a blow of his sword, which shivered my weapon to atoms. Springing upon my gigantic adversary, I wreathed my arms around him, and endeavored to make up for the want of a weapon, by bearing him to the deck in my arms; but my utmost exertions, desperate as they were, scarcely sufficed to stagger him, and shortening his blade, he was about plunging it into my heart, when a pistol went off close beside me, and my antagonist, giving a convulsive leap, fell dead upon the deck. I freed myself from his embrace and sprang to my feet, just in time to see little Dick, with the smoke still wreathing from the mouth of his pistol, borne away by the press of the assault. In the next instant I lost sight of him in the melee, which now became really terrific. Hastily snatching a brand from one of the fallen men, I plunged once more into the fight, for the enemy having been by this time reinforced by another boat, were now pouring in upon us in such numbers that the arm of every man became absolutely necessary. It was indeed a desperate contest. Hand to hand and foot to foot we fought; desperation on the one hand, and a determination to conquer on the other, lent double fury to our crew; while the clash of swords, the explosion of fire-arms, the shouts of the combatants, and the groans and shrieks of the wounded and dying, gave additional horror to the scene. By this time our captain had reached the deck, and his powerful voice was heard over all the din of the battle urging on his men. The fall of the enemy's leader began now to be generally known among his crew, and the consequence was soon apparent in their wavering and want of unity. In vain the inferior officers urged them on; in vain they found their retreat cut off by the shot we had hove into their boats; in vain they were reminded by their leaders that they must now conquer or die, they no longer fought with the fierceness of their first onset, and though they still combated manfully, and some of them desperately, they had lost all unity of purpose, and, struck with a sudden panic, at a last overwhelming charge of our gallant followers, they fled in disorder, some leaping wildly overboard, some crying for quarter when they could retreat no farther, and all of them giving up the contest as lost. Not a soul escaped. They who did not fall in the strife were either drowned in the panic-struck flight, or made prisoners. The whole contest did not last seven minutes. When they found themselves deserted by their men the officers sullenly resigned their swords, and we found that our assailants were a cutting-off party from the ship to starboard, an English frigate.

The man-of-war had not, it seems, discovered us until some time after the moon arose, when her light, happening to fall full upon our sails, betrayed us to their look-outs. The darkness almost directly afterward obscured us from sight, and the calm that ensued forbade her reaching us herself. Her boats were consequently manned, with the intention of carrying us by boarding. The most singular portion of it was that none of us perceived that the stranger was a man-of-war, but this may be accounted for from her being built after a new model, which gave her the appearance of a merchantman.

The bustle of the fight was over ; the prisoners had been secured ; the decks had been washed down ; my wound which turned out slight had been properly attended to ; and the watch had once more resumed their monotonous tread ; while at proper intervals, the solemn cry, "all's well," repeated from look-out to look-out, betokened that we were once more in security, before I sought my hammock. I soon fell asleep, but throughout the night I was troubled by wild dreams in which Beatrice the ship's boy, and the late strife, were mingled promiscuously. At length I awoke. It was still dark, and the only light near was a single lantern hung at the extremity of the apartment. My fellow mess-mates around were all buried in sleep. Suddenly the surgeon's mate stood beside me.

"Mr. Parker !" said he.

I raised myself up and gazed curiously into his face.

"Little Dick, sir —" he began.

"My God !" I exclaimed, for I had actually forgotten, in the excitement of the combat and the succeeding events, to inquire about my young preserver, and I now felt a strange presentiment that the mate had come to acquaint me with his death — "what of him ? Is any thing the matter !" I asked eagerly.

"I fear, sir," said the messenger, shaking his head sadly, "that he can not live till morning."

"And I have been lying here," I exclaimed, reproachfully, "while the poor boy is dying ;" and I sprang at once from my hammock, hurried on my clothes, saying, "lead me to him at once."

"He is delirious, but in the intervals of lunacy he asks for you, sir," and as the man spoke we stood by the bedside of the dying boy.

The sufferer did not lie in his usual hammock, for it was hung in the very midst of the crew, and the close air around it was really stifling ; but he had been carried to a place, nearly under the open hatchway, and laid there in a little open space of about four feet square. From the sound of the ripples I judged the schooner was in-motion, while the clear calm blue sky, seen through the opening overhead and dotted with myriads of stars, betokened that the fog had broken away. How calmly it smiled down on the wan face of the dying boy. Occasionally a light current of wind — oh ! how deliciously cool in that pent-up hold — eddied down the hatchway, and lifted the dark chesnut locks of the sufferer, as, with his little head reposing in the lap of an old veteran, he lay in an unquiet slumber. His shirt-collar was unbuttoned, and his childish bosom, as that of a girl, was open and exposed. He breathed quick and heavily. The wound of which he was dying, had been intensely painful, but within the last half hour had somewhat lulled, though even now his thin fingers tightly grasped the bed-clothes as if he suffered the greatest agony. Another battle-stained and gray-haired sea-man stood beside him, holding a dull lantern in his hand, and gazing sorrowfully down upon the sufferer. The surgeon knelt beside him, with his finger on the boy's pulse. As I approached they all looked up. The veteran who held him shook his head, and would

have spoken, but the tears gathered too chokingly in his eyes. The surgeon said,—

“He is going fast, — poor little fellow — do you see this?” and as he spoke he lifted up a rich gold locket, which had lain upon the boy’s breast. “He has seen better days.”

I could not answer, for my heart was full. Here was the being to whom, but a few hours before I had owed my life — a poor, slight unprotected child — lying before me, with death already written on his brow, — and yet I had never known of his danger, and never even sought him out after the conflict. How bitterly my heart reproached me in that hour. They noticed my agitation, and his old friend — the seaman that held his head — said sadly,—

“Poor little Dick — you’ll never see the shore again you have wished for so long. But there’ll be more than one — thank God! — when your log’s out, to mourn over you.”

Suddenly the little fellow opened his eyes, and gazed vacantly around.

“Has he come yet?” he asked in a low voice. “Why won’t he come?”

“I am here,” said I, taking the little fellow’s hand; “don’t you know me, Dick?”

“Doctor, I am dying, ain’t I?” said the little fellow, “for my sight grows dim. God bless you, Mr. Parker, for this. I see you now,” and he faintly pressed my hand.

“Can I do nothing for you, Dick?” said I. “You saved my life: God knows I would coin my own blood to buy yours.”

“I have nothing to ask, only, if it be possible, let me be buried by my mother, you will find the name of the place and all about it, in my trunk.”

“Any thing — every thing, my poor lad,” I answered chokingly.

The little fellow smiled faintly — it was like an angel’s smile — but he did not answer. His eyes were fixed on the stars flickering in that patch of blue sky, far overhead. His mind wandered.

“It is a long, long way up there, — but there are bright angels among them. Mother used to say that I would meet her there. How near they come, and I see bright faces smiling on me from them. Hark! is that music?” and, lifting his finger, he seemed listening intently for a moment. He fell back; and the old veteran burst into tears. The child was dead. Did he, indeed, hear angel’s voices? God grant it.

I opened his trunk, and then discovered his real name. Out of mercy to the unfeeling wretches, who were his relatives, and who had forced him to sea, I suppress it. Suffice it to say, his family had once been rich, but that reverses had come upon them. His father died of a broken heart, nor did his mother long survive. Poor boy! I could not fulfill the whole of his injunction, for we were far out at sea, but I caused a cenotaph to be erected for him beside his mother’s grave. It tells the simple tale of THE SHIP’S BOY.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WHITE SQUALL.

I was standing one sultry afternoon, by the weather-railing, gazing listlessly over the schooner's side, and indulging in such reveries as crowd upon the mind in our moments of idleness, when my attention was called to the cry of the look-out that a sail was hovering to windward; and gazing out in that direction I was soon enabled to detect a white speck far up on the seaboard in that quarter, bearing as much resemblance, in the eye of an unpractised observer, to the wing of a sea-gull, as to what we knew it really to be — the royal of a man-of-war. In an instant all was bustle on our decks. The men below poured up the gangway; the skulkers came out from under the sides of the guns; the officers gathered eagerly in a knot abaft the mainmast; spy-glasses were put in requisition, shrewd guesses were made respecting the flag of the stranger, and all the curiosity which the sight of an unknown sail produces on board a man-of-war, was displayed in its full force among us.

"I think she carries herself like a Frenchman," said the first lieutenant.

"Pardon me," said the skipper, "but she lifts as if she were an Englishman."

"I could swear her to be a Hollander," said a lieutenant, who had served a while in the navy of the States.

"And were you not all so sure," interposed a weather-beaten quarter-master, whose boast it was that he had been at sea for more than forty years, "I should say yon saucy braggart was a real Spaniard, such as Kyd would have given ten years of his life to be alongside of for a matter of a beil or so;" and having delivered himself of these remarks the old fellow coolly turned his quid, and squirted a stream of tobacco like the jet of a force-pump over the schooner's side.

"At any rate, gentlemen," said the captain, "the stranger doesn't seem to bring down much of a breeze with him, so that we shall have plenty of time to form our conclusions before it becomes necessary to act. If he should even prove to be an enemy, night may be here before he gets within range, and under cover of the darkness we can easily escape him. The little FIRE FLY has done too much mischief and been too lucky heretofore, to be lost now."

The day had been unusually sultry. A light breeze had ruffled the ocean in the morning, but about two bells in the afternoon watch the wind had died away, and an almost dead calm had succeeded. The

sea became as flat as a mirror, its polished surface only heaving in long gentle undulations, like the bosom of some sleeping monster. Not a ripple broke upon its whole extent. The sky was cloudless; the rays of the sun, pouring almost vertically downward, and penetrating even through the awning overhead, heated the deck till it became like a furnace beneath the feet. The air was close, stifling, noisome. The men cowered under the shade of the bulwarks, or hung panting over the schooner's side. The sea glowed like molten silver. Occasionally a slight gurgling sound under the cut-water would remind us that the deep was not wholly motionless; but excepting this and now and then the feeble creaking of a block, no sound broke the oppressive silence around.

At length, however, a slight breeze was seen ruffling the sea upon the seaboard; and when the wind came up toward us, curling the ocean here and there into mimic breakers, and when especially it swept with refreshing coolness across our decks, we experienced sensations of the most exquisite delight, and such as no one can imagine, who has not felt, after a sultry calm, the first kiss of the long-wished-for breeze. A new life was imparted into our men. The sails were set, and we once more began to hear the sound of the wind in the hamper, and of the waves rushing along our sides. It was, however, only a two-knot breeze. Such, with but little variation, it had continued to be, up to the discovery of the stranger.

For half an hour or more after our look-outs had detected the sail to windward, we managed to keep away sufficiently to maintain the distance we had first possessed. But gradually the wind freshened; the billows began to roll their white crests over in the sunlight, the sails strained under the press of the breeze; and the waters, rippling loud and fast under our bows, went plashing along our sides with a gurgling noise, and then hissed by the rudder as they whirled away astern.

"What a provoking breeze!" said Westbrook. "Here we are at a *convanient* distance, as O'Shaughnessy would say, from yonder chap, having besides the whole night before us to plan an escape from his clutches, and lo! a breeze springs up just when it ought to be calm, leaving us at the mercy of our huge friend up here, with a prospect of dangling from a yard-arm if he turns out to be an Englishman."

"Shure, an we'll blow ourselves out of water," said O'Shaughnessy himself, happening to overhear the conclusion of Westbrook's remark, "rayther than do that same."

"And into it also, eh!" said Westbrook.

O'Shaughnessy made no reply, but shrugging his shoulders, the conversation dropped.

The strange sail had by this time been made out to be a three-decker, and so rapidly did he gain on us that we now counted upward of forty guns on a side. As the breeze freshened, moreover his velocity increased. Throwing out fold after fold of canvas, until a pyramid of snowy duck rose towering above his decks, and the

water rolled in cataracts of foam beneath his gigantic bows, he seemed determined to overtake us before the breeze which he brought with him could by any possibility subside.

Meanwhile we made every effort to escape, but without success. The very freshness of the breeze, owing to our comparatively light canvas, was in favor of our adversary. In vain we threw out every sail in vain the ropes were hauled as taut as they could be drawn; in vain, as a last resort, our sails were wet down even to the trucks — every endeavor to increase our speed only appeared to weary out our crew, without altering the relative velocity of the two ships.

"By my faith! but yonder fellow sails well," said the skipper. "I little thought any thing that carried canvas could come up in this style, hand over hand, to the saucy FIRE-FLY. What think you, Mr. Stevens?"

The lieutenant shook his head, and answered:

"I fear, sir, we shall have to choose betwixt a surrender or a hopeless fight."

"Ay, ay — that's true," said the skipper, abstractedly, "but he's not overhauled us yet, and there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip, you know."

"Pray God, it may be so now!"

By this time the man-of-war had come up within long cannon-shot of the schooner, and just as the lieutenant finished his ejaculation, the stranger luffed beautifully up a point or two, and the next minute a sheet of flame streamed out from one of her bow-guns, and a shot whistling past us aloft, plunged headlong into the sea to leeward. At the same moment a roll of bunting shot up to the gaff of the stranger, and slowly unrolling blew out upon the air.

"The English cross — by all that's holy!" ejaculated the skipper.

There was a dead silence of more than a minute. Each one looked into his neighbor's face. The captain, with a compressed lip and a disturbed brow, gazed, without speaking, on the man-of-war; while the discipline of the service, as well as the sudden knowledge of our peril, were sufficient to restrain the officers from conversation. Directly, however, the Englishman luffed again; another sheet of fire blazed from her bows; and a ball, sent this time with more certainty of aim, went through our foretopsail just above the foot.

"Show him the bunting," growled the captain, through his clenched teeth, "and get ready the long gun."

We looked at each other in mute astonishment. I thought of Paul Jones in a like emergency. But no one dreamed of expostulation, even if such a thing had been allowable from inferiors. The flag was brought.

"Send the bunting aloft."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

The huge ensign, at the word, fluttered to the gaff, and whipping out on the breeze, disclosed the cognizance of the commonwealth, emblazoned on its surface. No sooner did it uncloset its folds than

the man-of-war luffed rapidly, and several points more than at either the preceding times; while simultaneously a sheet of continuous fire rolled along his side, and a shower of balls, plowing up the sea betwixt the two vessels, fell like hail around the schooner. At the same moment I heard a noise like rattling thunder at my side, and looking up I saw the mainsail coming down by the run. Quicker than thought it lay a wreck across the schooner.

"We are sinking," shouted a voice. It was that of the pursuer. The terror of the speaker betrayed itself in every tone. "God have mercy on us, for we are going down."

"Silence, fool!" sternly said the skipper; and then raising his voice he thundered, "what have they hurt?"

"They've cut away the throat halyards, and the peak has parted with the strain," answered the first lieutenant, who, with Westbrook and myself, had sprung at once to ascertain the real cause of alarm.

"Let new ropes be reeved — all hands to your duty — let drive with the long gun."

The old gunner had been calmly waiting until the momentary confusion should subside; and now, with his usual flourish, he applied the match.

"Hit him, by the Lord Harry — and put down his topsail," ejaculated the old sea-dog in high glee, as the stranger's foretopsail fell from the cap.

This daring bravado appeared to inflame the haughty Englishman beyond all endurance, for, after the momentary vacillation in his course occasioned by the loss of so important a sail, he put his helm down again, and without losing headway to fire any more unimportant shot, rapidly approached us. Our fate was now to all appearance, sealed. We gave ourselves up for lost. Dismal recollections of all we had heard respecting the prison-ships of our enemy, or of the more summary punishment of death sometimes inflicted on our countrymen, came crowding on our minds. We looked into each others' faces in silence, but, though no word was spoken, on every countenance we read the determination of a brave man, to die sooner than to submit. Such a resolution may seem strange to others, but we were like men to whom defeat is worse than death. We could not submit. To us the horrors of a prison-ship were more appalling than those of a grave. We were resolved, if we could not effect an escape, to die at bay.

"I would give a year's pay," at length ejaculated the skipper, but in a low tone so as not to be heard by the crew, "if this breeze would but die away here. We should then have a chance however slight. But to be cooped up like a rat in a hole — it is too bad!"

The sentence had scarcely been concluded, when, as if in answer to the skipper's aspiration, the breeze blew out in a sudden gust, and then died rapidly away, until it had almost subsided.

"Ah!" said the captain, "my wish has had a magical effect. 'Faith, we're dropping the Englishman already. Oh, for two hours of calm."

"And we shall have it soon, though not for long," said the old quarter-master, for the first time for nearly an hour taking a complete survey of the sky, and shaking his head knowingly, but with something of an ominous gesture. As he concluded his scrutiny, he said, "there's something brewing off here to leeward which will make us before many hours reel like a drunken man, or my name isn't Jack Martingale."

"What mean you?" said the lieutenant.

"You've mayhap never sailed in these latitudes, or you would have seen a hurricane afore now," said the quarter-master. "Well, yonder tiny cloud, down there on the sea board in a line with that second ratlin, holds in itself such a capful of wind as will drive the stoutest ship like a feather before it — ay! or send Noah's ark itself, which the parson says was bigger than a fleet of ninety-fours, skimming away swifter than a sea-gull over the seas."

We all turned in the direction to which the old fellow pointed us, and sure enough, about five or six degrees above the horizon, might be seen a small dark insignificant-looking cloud, hanging like a speck upon the azure surface of the sky. Had we not known the quarter-master's superior experience, the younger portion of our group might have discredited his prophecy. As it was, we were almost incredulous. Yet as we gazed on the little cloud, we noticed that it slowly but steadily increased in size. Our attention, however, was at this moment recalled from the signs to leeward by the renewed demonstrations of an attack on the part of the ninety-four.

The wind, during our short colloquy, I have said, had blown fiercer than ever, and then nearly died away. This partial calm, however, had been of short duration. In a few minutes the breeze was seen ruffling the sea again, from a quarter of the horizon, however, several points to the leeward of its old position. After blowing freshly for a few minutes this gust too ceased. Meantime the enemy had gained little, if any thing, upon us, and no doubt, fancying he perceived the signs of unsettled weather in the sky and therefore wishing to bring the chase to a speedy determination, he luffed up once more, and opened fire on us with his bow guns. It now became a struggle of the most exciting character. Our mainsail had by this time been repaired, and the time lost to the foe in luffing nearly counterbalancing his superior sailing, we were enabled to keep just within long cannon-shot of the Englishman, and, by maintaining this distance, to protract our surrender until a chance ball should happen to disable us, or night should set in to favor our escape.

"He gains nothing on us now, I think," said the skipper, "but his guns are well served. That was truly sent," he suddenly added, as a ball whistled by within a few feet of his head, and then plunged into the sea some fathoms off.

"And there comes the breeze again," said the lieutenant; "how the Englishman walks up toward us."

"Never flinch, my hearties," ejaculated the gunner, as one of his crew was struck by a splinter, and had to be carried below

"Give it to 'em, for villains and tyrants as they are. Hah! I have him in a line there. Stand by all now;" and giving a last squint along his piece, he applied the match, and gazing after the shot as it went whistling away exclaimed: "hit him on the quarter. I wonder who's hurt," he added, as a sudden commotion was seen on the enemy's deck; "somebody of more note than a mere topman, I guess, or they wouldn't be in such a flurry about it."

"And that's the answer," said Westbrook, as a ball struck us forward, scattering the bulwark about the deck, and killing a man outright at the gunner's side.

"Swab her out there," said the imperturbable old sea-dog, without flinching in the least, "and we'll revenge poor Harry Ratline. By the Lord above, I'll make them pay for this. Work faster, you lubberly scoundrel," he continued, cuffing the powder-boy. "There, that will do. And now let's see what damage you'll do, old red-mouth!" and patting his piece familiarly, he applied the match, and stooping on his knees after the recoil, glanced along the gun to mark the path of his ball. It struck the ninety-four just by the fore-chains, entering the first port aft. It needed nothing to tell the deadly revenge of the shot. Even amid the roar of the contest we could almost fancy we heard the shrieks of the wounded and dying from that fatal discharge.

So intensely occupied had been every thought, during these last few minutes, that I had not noticed the gradual subsidence in the wind; but my attention was at this moment aroused to it by an exclamation of O'Shaughnessy at my side, and turning my gaze to leeward, I saw at once the cause of his wonder.

How long had elapsed since we had noticed the speck on the horizon to which the old quarter-master had called our attention I have no means of determining; but, owing perhaps to the rapidity with which all the subsequent events had transpired, it seemed to be scarcely five minutes. In that interval a radical change had come over the heavens. The whole of the larboard horizon was covered with a dense black cloud, extending to the very zenith, and spreading with incredible velocity around the seaboard and over the vault of heaven. Even as I gazed, the rising clouds began to encroach on the western firmament, until only a narrow speck of sky through which the declining sun shone out with a ghastly luster was seen in that quarter of the horizon. In a moment more the massy curtain of cloud obscured even this opening, and nothing was seen above or around us but the wild and ominous darkness, which, reflected from the unruffled surface of the deep, and struggling with the few faint gleams of light that yet remained, wrapt every thing in its own sepulchral gloom. Never shall I forget the expression of my companions' faces in that death-like obscurity.

"Can not yonder fellow see the doom that awaits him, unless he gives over firing, and prepares for the squall?" said the old quarter-master.

Even as he spoke a low hollow murmur was heard as if coming

out of the deep, which struck a nameless terror into our hearts. It was the sure presage of the coming hurricane. The men were already aloft getting in the sails, but as that murmured sound struck on the skipper's ear he shouted,

"Loose and let run — in with every thing — lose not a second — cut with and cut all."

He had hardly commenced speaking when the dark canopy of clouds on the starboard seaboard lifted up, as if by magic, several degrees from the horizon, displaying a long lurid, yet sickly streak of light, against which the surges rose and fell in bold relief. At the same instant that low wild sound was heard again rising out of the deep; then a hoarse murmur, the like of which I had never listened to before, issued from the lurid seaboard; then an ominous pause for a moment, and only a moment, succeeded; and, while we gazed in mute wonder on each other at these extraordinary phenomena, a deep, smothered rumbling noise was heard, growing rapidly higher and higher, and increasing in loudness as it approached; the sea on the starboard horizon became a mass of foam; and, with a rushing noise, the tempest swept down upon us, hissing, roaring, and screaming through our rigging, as if a thousand unearthly beings were riding by upon the blast. The men had scarcely time to see the approaching danger, and hear the captain's cry.

"Down, for your lives, down — cut all, and slide by the back-stays," before we were lying almost on our beam-ends, while the sea flew over us in a dense shower of spray, almost blinding our sight.

"Hard up!" thundered the skipper.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

It was a period of fearful peril. For several moments, during the first force of the squall, we knew not whether our little craft would right again. At length, however, with a painful effort, our gallant craft slowly righted, staggered a moment uncertainly beneath the squall, and then catching the hurricane well aft, went off like a thunderbolt before the gale.

"Thank God!" ejaculated the skipper, drawing a long breath.

"Amen!" was my silent response.

During these few last moments of thrilling suspense, I had forgotten the Englishman altogether, but he now recurred to my thoughts, and I looked eagerly ahead for him. The driving spray however, shut out every thing, except in our immediate vicinity, from our sight. At length, however, my attention was arrested by seeing a tall spar rising over the mist on our lee-bow, and rushing on to it with inconceivable velocity, we were soon on the weather-quarter of the foe. Never shall I forget that sight. The huge ship was lying on its beam-ends, and his mizzen-mast had already been cut away in an unsuccessful attempt to right him. The sea rolled over him, as we approached, in cataracts. For an instant we gave ourselves up for lost, as we were driving right on to the unhappy stranger. At that moment, however, we saw his mainmast go over his side. He

righted slowly. We were now so near that I could have pitched a biscuit on board.

"Hard up — ha — a — rd!" thundered the Englishman.

"Luff — luff!" roared the skipper, as we drove on to the quarter of the foe.

It was a thrilling moment. For the space of a second we seemed dashing right into the foe, and a stifled shriek burst from every lip, but just as we gave up all for lost, the two vessels shot apart, grazed each other in passing, and then rushed like maddened coursers each on his own course. In less than a quarter of an hour, the foe had vanished in the mist upon our larboard quarter.

CHAPTER X.

VISIT TO BEATRICE.

WE had now been several months at sea, and although our stores had been more than once replenished from the prizes we had taken, our provisions began to grow scarce. The skipper accordingly announced his intention of going into port. We bore up, therefore, for Charleston, that being the most convenient harbor.

My emotions on approaching the place where Beatrice resided, I shall not attempt to describe. A full year had passed since we had parted, and in all that time I had heard of her but once. Might she not now be married to another? The proverbial fickleness of her sex; the known opposition of her family to my suit; her uncertainty whether I still continued to care for her, or whether even I was yet alive; and a thousand other reasons why she might be unfaithful to me, rose up before me to torture me with doubts. But most of all, I reflected on our different situations in society. She was rich, courted, allied to rank — I was poor, unknown, and a rebel officer. Many a night as I lay in my solitary hammock, or trod my silent watch on deck, the fear that I might find Beatrice the wife of another filled my soul with agony. And yet could I doubt her faith?

At length we entered Charleston harbor, and with a gentle breeze floated up toward the town. It was a moonless night, but the sky above was spangled with a thousand stars, and the low outline of the city before us glittered with myriads of lamps. The wind just ruffled the glassy surface of the bay, fanning us, as it swept by, with a delicious coolness. Here and there, on either shore, a light from a

solitary house flickered through the darkness, while occasionally a sheet of summer lightning would play along the western firmament, where a low belt of clouds skirted the horizon, and hung like a veil above the city. Every thing reminded me of the night when I had sailed up this same harbor with Beatrice. What had I not witnessed since then! The shipwreck, the battle, the hurricane, fire and sword, danger in every shape, almost death itself—I had endured them all. During that period where had been Beatrice? A few hours would determine.

With a beating heart, the next morning I sought the residence of Beatrice's uncle. How my brain swam and my knees tottered when I came in sight of the mansion which contained the form of her whom I loved! I had understood that the family, except one or two of the ladies of it, were out of town, and I burned with impatience to ascertain whether Beatrice was among the absentees. Yet my heart failed me when I came in sight of the residence of her uncle. I recollected the terms on which I had parted with Mr. Rochester, and I scarcely thought myself allowable in intruding on his hospitality in any shape. But, then, how else could I obtain an interview with Beatrice? Again and again I approached the door, and again and again I changed my mind and retired; but at length remembering that my conduct was attracting attention, and unable longer to endure my suspense, I advanced boldly to the portal, and knocked at the hall-door. It was answered by a strange porter. With a fluttering heart I inquired for Miss Derwent. I felt relieved from a load of fear when informed that she was in town, and hastily thrusting my card into the man's hand, I followed him eagerly into the drawing room. He disappeared, and I was alone.

Who can forget his emotions, when, after a long separation from the object of his love, he finds himself under the same roof with his mistress, awaiting her appearance? How he pictures to himself the joy with which the announcement of his arrival, especially if unexpected, will be received! He fancies every look that will be exchanged and every word that will be said at the moment of meeting. As the moments elapse, he imagines, however short the time may be, that the appearance of his mistress is unavoidably delayed, and a hundred fears arise, vague, unfounded, and but half believed, that perhaps her affection has grown lukewarm. Each successive instant of suspense increases his doubts until they amount almost to agony; and as a light footfall—oh! how well remembered!—breaks upon his ear, he almost dreads to meet her whom but an hour before he would have given worlds to behold. So was it now with myself. As minute after minute elapsed, and still Beatrice did not appear, my fears amounted almost to madness; and when at length I heard her light tread approaching, my heart began to beat so violently that I thought I should have fainted. Anxious to resolve my doubts, by observing her demeanor before I should be seen myself, I sprang into the recess of a window. As I did so, the door opened and Bea-

trice entered hurriedly, looking, if possible, more beautiful than ever. Her cheek was flushed, her step was quick and eager, and her eyes shone with a joy that could not be affected. She advanced several steps into the room, when, perceiving no one, she gazed inquiringly around, with a look, I thought, of disappointment. I moved from the recess. She turned quickly around at the noise, blushed over brow, neck, and bosom, and with a faint cry of joy, sprang forward, and was locked the next instant in my arms.

“Beatrice — my own, my beautiful!”

“Harry — *dear* Harry!” were our mutual exclamations, and then locked in each other's embrace, for a moment we forgot in our rapture to speak.

At length we awoke from this trance of delight and found leisure for rational conversation. Sitting side by side on the sofa, with our hands locked together, and our eyes looking as it were into each other's souls, we recounted our mutual histories since our separation. With mine the reader is already acquainted. That of Beatrice was naturally less checkered, but yet it was not without interest.

I have said that an alliance had been projected between Beatrice and her cousin, and that Mr. Rochester had placed his whole soul on the consummation of this project. The consciousness of my interest in the heart of Beatrice had induced their conduct toward myself, under the hope that if once separated from her, I would be eventually forgotten by Miss Derwent. Time, however, proved how false had been this hope. Instead of prospering in his suit from my absence, every day seemed to make the success of her cousin more problematical. In vain her uncle persuaded; in vain he expostulated; in vain he lavished all his scorn on me as a beggar and a rebel, — Beatrice continued unmoved; now defending me from every imputation, and now with tears giving up the contest, although unconvinced. The letter she received from me, by acquainting her with my projected cruise, prepared her for the long silence on my part which had ensued; and although reports, no doubt originating with her persecutors, were circulated respecting my arrival in port, and the disreputable life I was said to lead, she remained faithful to me amid it all. Oh! what is like woman's love? Amid sorrow and joy; in sunshine or storm; whether distant or near; in every varied circumstance of life, it is the solace of our existence, the green spot amid the arid deserts of the world. Nothing can change it — nothing can dim its brightness. Even injury fails to break down the love of woman. You may neglect, you may abuse her, if you will; but still, with a devotion not of this earth, she clings to you, cheering you in distress, smiling on you in joy, and amply repaid if she only win in return one kind word, one look of approval. Thank God! that, fallen as we are, there is left to us that link of our diviner nature — the pure, deep, unchanging love of woman.

With what joy did I hear that Beatrice was still mine, wholly mine, and how ardently did I press her to my bosom, invoking her again

and again to repeat the blessed words which assured me of her love. Hours passed away as if they had been minutes. And when at length I rose to depart, and imprinting another kiss on her but half-averted lips, took my leave with a promise to return again the ensuing morning, my astonishment passed all bounds to learn that noon had long since passed, and that the evening, was almost at hand.

During the short time that we remained in port, I was daily with Beatrice, and when we parted she pledged herself to be mine at the end of another year, come what might. My heart, I will admit, reproached me afterward for winning this promise from her, and inducing her to give up wealth and luxury for the bare comforts an officer's pay could afford; and yet her love was such a priceless gem, and she looked up to me with such unreserved devotedness, that I could not regret a vow which insured me the right to protect her from the cold tempests of the world. Besides, we were both young and full of hope, and I trusted some fortunate event might occur which would yet allow us to be united with the concurrence of her friends.

"Uncle is suspected and watched by the colonial authorities," said Beatrice, as we parted, "and I fear me that he is linked in with some of those who have designs against the state. I tremble to think what might be his fate if detected in any conspiracy to restore the king's authority."

"Fear not, dearest," I replied, "I will interest Col. Moultrie in his favor, and besides, your uncle must see the danger of any such attempt at present."

"And yet I have fearful forebodings."

"Cheer up, sweet one, he has nothing to dread. But now I must go. God bless you, Beatrice!" and I kissed her fervently.

She murmured something half inaudibly, returned my parting embrace with a sigh, and, while a tear stood in her eye, waved a final adieu with her kerchief. In an hour the schooner had sailed

CHAPTER XI.

CUTTING OUT.

WE had been at sea but a few days, having run down the Bahamas in that time, when we spoke a French merchantman, and obtained from him the intelligence that an English ship, with a valuable cargo and a large amount of specie, was then lying at the port of —, in one of the smaller islands. She was well armed, however, and carried the crew of a letter of marque. But the skipper instantly determined on attempting her capture. Accordingly, we bore up for the island within an hour after we had spoken the merchantman, and having a favorable breeze to second our wishes, we made the low headlands of the place of our destination just as the sun sunk behind them into the western ocean. Not wishing to be detected we hauled off until evening, spending the intervening time in preparing for the adventure.

The night was fortunately dark. There was no moon, and a thick veil of vapors overhead effectually shrouded the stars from sight. The seaboard was lined with dusky clouds; the ocean heaved in gentle undulations; and a light breeze murmured by, with a low soft music in its tone, like the whisper of a young girl to her lover. As the twilight deepened, the shadowy outlines of the distant land became more and more indistinct, until at length they were merged in the obscurity of the whole western firmament. No sound was heard over the vast expanse as we resumed our course, and silently stretched up toward the island.

"Pipe away the boats' crews," said the skipper, when, every thing having been planned, we had steered our craft under the shadow of the huge cape, and now lay to in our quiet nook, hidden from observation.

The boatswain issued his summons almost in a whisper, and the men answered with unusual promptness. In a few minutes the boats were manned, and we were waiting with muffled oars for the signal. We lingered only a moment to receive the last orders of the captain, when, with a whispered "give way," the gallant fellows bent to the oars, and we shot from the schooner's side. In a few moments she was lost in the gloom. I watched her through the gathering night, as spar after spar faded into the obscurity, until at length nothing could be seen of her exquisite proportions but a dark

and shapeless mass of shadow; and at length, when I turned my eyes in her direction again, after having had my attention for a moment called away, even the slight outline of her form had disappeared, and nothing but the gloomy seaboard met my eye.

The night was now so dark that we could scarcely see a fathom before us; but, guided by an old salt who had been brought up on the island, and knew the harbor as accurately as a scholar knows his horn-book, we boldly kept on our course. As we swept around the headland, we perceived that the town, so lately alive with lights, was now buried in a profound darkness. The solitary lantern, however, still burned at the fore-peak of the Englishman, like a star hanging alone in the firmament, to guide us on our way. Every eye was fixed on it as we rapidly but noiselessly swept up toward the merchantman. The fort was buried in gloom. The other vessels in the harbor lay hidden in the palpable obscurity ahead. No sound was heard, no object was seen, as we moved on in our noiseless course. At length the huge hull of the merchantman began to be indistinctly visible upon our starboard bow, and, lying on our oars for a moment, we held a short, eager consultation on our future course. It was soon however, terminated. As yet we had remained undiscovered and as the slightest accident might betray us, not a moment was to be lost if we would surprise the foe. It had been arranged that I should dash into the larboard side of the Englishman, while the two other boats should attack him simultaneously on his starboard bow and quarter; and accordingly, as my companions sheered off, I gave a whispered order to my men to pull their best, and the next instant we were shooting with the rapidity of an arrow right on to the foe.

We had scarcely pulled a dozen strokes, and were yet some distance from the ship, when the sentry from her quarter cried out, "Boat ahoy!" and then perceiving that we still advanced, he fired his piece and gave the alarm. I saw the moment for action had come. Disguise was now useless. Instantaneously I forgot the feelings which had just been passing through my mind, and, like a war-horse starting at a trumpet, I sprang up in the stern sheets, and waving my sword aloft, shouted,

"Give way, my lads — give way, and lay us aboard the rascals — with a will, boys — pull!"

As if fired with an enthusiasm which nothing might resist, my gallant fellows sprang to their oars with renewed vigor at my words, until the oaken blades almost snapped beneath their brawny arms; and we were already within a few fathoms of the ship's quarters when a volley from the merchantman hit the stroke-oarsman in front of me, and he fell dead across the thwart. The boat staggered in her course. I could hear our companions surging but a short distance behind, and I burned to be the first to mount the enemy's deck.

"On -- on!" I shouted; "pull for your lives, my lads — pull pull!"

A thundering cheer burst from the brave veterans, as they bent with even redoubled power to their task, and with a few gigantic strokes sent us shooting upon the quarters of the foe. Waving my sword above my head, I sprang at once up the ship's side, calling on my crew to follow me. They needed not the invocation. The boat had scarcely touched the vessel before every man, cutlass in hand, was clambering over the side of the foe; and in an instant, with one simultaneous spring, old and young, officers and men, we tumbled in upon the enemy. And like men they met us. It was no child's play — that conflict! Fearfully outnumbering us, apprised of and ready for our onset, fighting on their own decks too, and knowing that succor was at hand from the fort even in case of defeat, the crew of the Englishman met our attack with an unbroken front, giving back blow for blow and shout for shout. Short, wild, and terrific was the conflict. Conscious of the vicinity of the other boats, the enemy wished to overcome us before we could be succored; while we struggled as desperately to maintain our footing until aid should arrive. But our efforts were in vain. Pressing on to us in dense, overpowering numbers, and hemming us in on every quarter but that by which we had boarded the ship, they seemed determined to drive us into the ocean pell-mell, or slaughter us outright. No quarter was asked or given. Man after man fell around me in the vain attempt to maintain our footing. Already I had received two cutlass wounds myself. Our ranks were fearfully thinned. Yet still I cheered on my men, determined rather to die at bay than surrender or retreat. But all seemed in vain. Three several men had already fallen before my arm, and the deck was slippery with the blood of friend and foe; yet the enemy did not appear to lessen in numbers. As fast as one man fell, another filled his place. Despair took possession of us. I saw nothing before us but a glorious death, and I determined that it should be one long after to be talked of by my countrymen. All this, however, had passed almost in a minute. Suddenly I heard a cheer on the starboard bow of the enemy, and as it rose clear and shrill over all the din of the conflict, I recognized the Fire-Flies clambering over the ship's side in that direction.

“Huzza! the day's our own!” I shouted, in the revulsion of feeling. “Come on, my lads, and let us hew the scoundrels to the chine!” and, with another wild huzza, I dashed like a madman upon the cutlasses of the foe.

“Come on, ye rebel knaves!” growled the leader of the British, and striking at me with his cutlass, to challenge me to single combat. One of my men sprang to my aid.

“Back — back!” I shouted, “leave him to me.”

“A curse be on you —” but his words were lost in the clash of the conflict. For a moment I thought he was more than my match, but his very rage overreached itself and failing to guard himself sufficiently, he exposed his person, and the next instant my sword passed through his body. He fell backward without a groan. His men saw him fall, and a score of weapons were pointed at me.

"Down with him — hew him to the ground," roared the British.

"Hurra for Parker! — beat back the villains!" thundered my own men, and the contest, which had paused during the combat between the fallen chief and myself, now raged with redoubled frenzy, the whole fury of the enemy being directed against myself. I remember shouts, curses, and groans, the clash of cutlasses and the roar of fire-arms, and then comes a faint memory of a sharp pain in my side, succeeded by a reeling in my brain, and a sensation of staggering, as if about to fall. After that all was blank.

When I recovered my senses, I was lying on the quarter-deck, while the cool night-breeze swept deliciously over my fevered brow, and my ears were soothed with the gentle ripple of the waters as the ship moved on her course. A solitary star, struggling through a rent in the clouds overhead, shone calmly down on me. I turned uneasily around.

"How are you, Parker?" said the voice of the lieutenant, approaching me. "We are nearing the schooner rapidly, when you'll have your wound attended to — I bandaged it as well as I could."

"Thank you," I said, faintly. "But have you really brought off the prize?"

"Ay, ay," said he laughing, "we got off although they hailed cannon-balls around us like sugar-plums at a carnival in Rome. Never before did I run such a gauntlet. But the sleepy fellows did not get properly awake until we had made sail — had they opened their fire at once, they might have sent us to Davy Jones's locker in a trice."

"And the enemy's crew?"

"All snug below hatches, every mother's son of them. They fought like devils, and came within an ace of beating us. But, faith, yonder is the old schooner. Ship, ahoy!"

We were soon aboard. My wound proved a serious, though not a dangerous one, and for several weeks I was confined to my hammock.

CHAPTER XII.

SCOURING THE CHANNEL.

"How is the night overhead?" asked Westbrook, as I came down into the messroom; and, pushing the jug toward me, he added, "you see we're going to make a night of it; take a pull at the Jamaica — it's rare stuff."

"Misty, with a light breeze; we'll make the land, if we keep on this course, before morning. We've harried the enemy's shipping enough in the chops of the channel — I can't see what the skipper means by running in so close to the English coast."

"Faith! he's after some harum-scarum prank — blowing a stray merchantman out of water in sight of land, or throwing a shot into Portsmouth by way of bravado to the fleet. Well, what need we care? A short life and a merry one — cut away at the junk, my good fellow; cut deeper — ay! that's it, a slice like we lawyers take of our clients' money, the better half of the whole."

"A lawyer! — what do you know of the profession?" said I.

"I was once a lawyer myself," said he, as he transferred a huge slice of the beef into his mouth.

"A lawyer! — a land-shark! — you a lawyer!" were the exclamations of astonishment which burst from every lip.

"Ay! am I the first jolly fellow who gave up a bad trade for a good one? I beg your pardon, Parker — I believe you come from a race of lawyers; but if so, it is no more than happened to myself. My friends made a land-shark of me, but as nature intended me for something better, the experiment failed. My first case was enough for me, and I cut the profession — or, rather, it cut me. The court asked me to repeat an authority I had quoted, but I was so taken aback by something that had happened to me just before, and which I'll tell you by and by, that, for the life of me, I couldn't call to mind a single point decided. I grew embarrassed, stammered, looked down, came to a dead halt; and at length, when I heard the spectators tittering around me, I grasped my hat, shot from the courthouse, and have never entered one since without an aguish shiver. The judge said I was a fool; my client agreed with him; I never got a cent; everybody laughed at me; and so I kicked Coke and Plowden into the fire, cursed the law to my heart's content, and took to the service in a fortnight; thinking it better to thrive on biscuit and salt-junk, than to work for nothing and starve for my pains."

"Shure, and a dacent gentleman," said O'Shaughnessy, "would have been spoilt in making a blackgown of you Westbrook. Here's confusion to lawyers, and a bumper for the girls!"

"The girls — hurrah!" sang the mess in one voice. "No heel taps!" and it was drank enthusiastically.

"Ah! and Parker has a song on the sweet angels," said Westbrook; "we'll all join in the chorus."

"The song — the song!" roared the mess.

Thus pressed, I had no escape, and taking a pull at the taker to clear my throat, I sang the following stanzas:

THE GIRLS WE LOVE.

AIR — *Nancy Dawson.*

Our country's girls have azure eyes,
And tresses like the sunset skies,
And hearts to seek, nor need disguise —
As pure as heaven above, sir;
With voices like a seraph's light,
And forms that swim before the sight
And waists to tempt an anchorite —
They are the girls to love, sir.

Though France may boast her dark brunette,
And Spain her eyes of flashing jet,
And Greece her tones you ne'er forget —
So like the song of dove, sir —
Columbia's maids have tones as sweet,
And cheeks where snow and roses meet,
Such lips, and then, egad! such feet!
They are the girls to love, sir.

Oh! we are reefers bold and gay;
We brave the storm and court the fray,
Yet ne'er forget the girls away,
However far we rove, sir.
I sometimes fancy they're decoys
To lure us on to fancied joys;
They'll be our ruin yet my boys! —
Here's to the girls we love, sir.

The deafening chorus of the last three lines of this song, repeated by the whole mess in full voice, had scarcely died away, when the quarter-master knocked at the door, and told us that we had given chase to a strange sail, and that there would soon be hot work on deck. Before he had well finished the room was empty, and we had all sprung up the gangway.

As I stepped upon the deck, I cast my eyes naturally upward, and, for a moment, was almost staggered at the press of sail we were carrying. My astonishment was, however, of short duration, for when I saw on our bow the distant lights of the English coast, glimmering like stars on the horizon, I knew at once that we must overtake the chase directly or abandon her altogether. We were already in dan-

gerous proximity to the enemy's shores, and every minute lessened the distance betwixt them and the FIRE FLY. Yet the skipper maintained his course. The chase was a large brig, running in toward the land with every rag of her canvas strained to the utmost ; while we were endeavoring to get to windward of her, and thus force her out to sea. It soon became evident that we were succeeding in our aim. Indeed I had rarely seen the little FIRE FLY do better. Before fifteen minutes, we were well in on the land side of the chase, and had every apparent chance of capturing her without the firing of a shot. Hitherto she had been doggedly silent. But finding now that we had beat her on the tack she had chosen, and seeing no chance of escape but in going off dead before the wind, and spreading the pyramid of light sails in which a brig has always the advantage of a schooner, she put her helm suddenly down, and, throwing out rag after rag, was soon seen speeding away through the twilight like a frightened bird upon the wing. At the same instant she began firing from her signal guns, to warn the coasters, if any there were, in her vicinity.

"By my faith," said Westbrook, "she makes noise and flutter enough; one would think her a wounded gull, screaming as she flew. But her alarm guns won't save her. See how our old growler will pick off her fancy yards — there goes one now!" and, as he spoke, a shot from our long gun cut away the maintopmast of the brig just by the cap. She fell behind at once. Another ball or two, sent with unerring aim, was attended with like success, and before twenty minutes we were ranging alongside of the chase, with our ports up, our lanterns lighted, the men at the guns, and everything, in short, prepared, to pour in a broadside if the Englishman did not surrender. We saw her ensign come down as we drew alongside, but a jack was still left flying at the fore.

"Have you surrendered?" asked the skipper, leaping into the main-rigging, as we ranged up by the quarter of the foe.

There was a dogged silence of a minute, and the skipper was about waving his hand as a signal to open our fire, when a voice from the quarter-deck of the brig answered —

"We've hauled down our flag."

We took possession of the chase and found her indeed a prize. She was deeply laden with silks, but we were most pleased with a booty of specie to the amount of several hundred thousands of dollars. I never saw a more cowardly set of men than her crew. They had run below hatches, in spite of all the master could do, almost as soon as we opened our fire on them ; and when we boarded her, there was no one on deck except her skipper, a surly, obstinate old Englishman, who was doggedly biting off a piece of pigtail as long as the tiller by which he stood. He told us that he had spoken, but the day before, several outward-bound vessels, and that nothing was talked of along shore but the Yankee schooner that was scouring the channel, a craft that, it was whispered, was sailed on account of Davy Jones, and

which it would be impossible to escape from as from a *pampero* off Buenos Ayres. We could not but smile at this flattering picture of ourselves and craft. The old skipper told us, in conclusion, that no less than two men-of-war, besides the usual channel cruisers, had been dispatched in pursuit of us, and he even hinted, coolly turning his quid, that he had little fear of a long imprisonment, for we would be sure to be caught before twenty-four hours should elapse.

As it would be impossible to carry off the prize, and as the conflict had doubtless been heard on shore, the skipper determined to end the adventure as boldly as he had begun it, and, accordingly, he ordered the brig to be set on fire, when we should have removed whatever of the cargo was most valuable and portable. It was accordingly done. When we filled away to leave the chase, the smoke could just be seen, curling in light wreaths up her hatchways, but she presented no other evidence of the ruin that was so soon to overtake her. Her forward sails had been left standing, and her helm lashed down, and she now lay to beautifully, drifting bodily off to leeward like a line-of-battle ship. The utter desertion of her decks, her slow, majestic movements as she rose and fell, the twilight into which she was gradually fading, and the glittering line of lights behind her, along the hostile coast, associated inseparably in our minds with ideas of danger to ourselves, contributed to form a scene as imposing as it was beautiful, and one that raised a feeling of interest in our bosoms, tinged in no slight degree with that awe which always accompanies a sensation of peril. While we gazed breathlessly, however, on the fast-receding brig, dark clouds of smoke began to puff up her hatchways, and rolling heavily to leeward, settle on the face of the waters. Directly a forked tongue of flame shot up into the air, licked around her mast, and then went out as suddenly as it had appeared. Soon, however, darker masses of smoke rolled, volume on volume, up the hatchways, and directly like a flash of lightning, the fire shot clear and high up from the hold, and catching to the shrouds, stays, and every portion of the hamper, ran swiftly across the ship, mounted up the rigging, and licking and wreathing around the spars, soon enveloped the chase in a pyramid of flame, which eddied in the breeze, and streamed like a signal banner far away to leeward. How wild and fantastic, like spirits dancing on the air, were the attitudes and shapes the fire assumed! Now the flames would blaze steadily up for a minute; now they would blow apart like whiffs of smoke; and now they would leap bodily away, in huge and riven masses, into the dense canopy of smoke to leeward. At times they would wind spirally around the hamper; again they would taper off far up into the unfathomable night. On every hand the waves had assumed the hue of fire. The heavens above were lurid. The crackling and hissing of the flames could be heard even at our distance from the brig. Millions of spark, sent up from the blazing ship, whirled off on the wind, and showered down to leeward. Occasionally a stray spar fell simmering into the water. At length

the brig fell off from her course, and drifting broadside on before the wind, came down toward us, rolling so frightfully as to jerk the flames, as it were, bodily out of her. I was still gazing spell-bound on the magnificent spectacle, when I heard an exclamation of surprise over my shoulder, and turning quickly around, I saw the skipper gazing intently over the burning ship, as if he watched for something hidden behind her. He saw my movement, and asked,

"Do you not detect a sail to windward, just in the rear of the brig? Wait till the wind whirls away the fire — there."

There was no mistaking it. A large man-of-war, to judge by her size and rig, partially concealed by the brig, was coming down to us, with studding-sails all spread, and the English cross flying at her main.

"We are already under a press of sail — as much as we can conveniently spread," said the skipper, as if musingly, looking aloft; "and the Englishman will have to give the brig somewhat of a berth. Ah! there comes the enemy — a frigate as I live!"

Every one on board had by this time had their attention turned to the approaching stranger, and now, as she bore away to leave the wreck to starboard, every eye was fixed on her form. She came gallantly out from behind her fiery veil, riding gracefully on the long surges, and seeming, as her white sails reflected back the flames, more like a spectral than a mortal ship. The momentary admiration with which we gazed on her, as she emerged into view, soon, however, faded before the anxious feelings arising out of the extremity of our peril. But there was nothing to be gained by idle forebodings. The frigate was evidently gaining on us, and it became necessary to spread every inch of canvas we had, in order to escape her. Men also were sent aloft, and buckets whipped up to them, in order that our sails might be kept constantly wet; the masts were eased, the water started, every useless thing thrown over-board, and all the exertions which desperate men resort to were adopted to insure our escape. After an agitating suspense of five minutes, we found that we were slowly drawing ahead of the frigate, and our hopes were still further raised, in a short space afterward, by the growing thickness of the fog.

"We are not caught this time yet," said I to Westbrook; "and now for *la belle France*."

"Ay! the skipper's had enough of such hot quarters as these, I fancy; at least, after such a haul of specie, he'll not run any more risks if he can help it. Depend upon it, we shall be making love to the fair Parisian *grisettes* before a fortnight rolls overhead."

"Not so fast, Mr. Westbrook," said the old quarter-master, who overheard us by chance — "do you see that?" and he pointed to a rocket which that instant shot up from the deck of the frigate, and then arching over in the sky, broke into a thousand sparkles, which fell shivering to the water. "If I know any thing of such sky-lighters, that bloody Englishman has a consort somewhere hereabouts — and there he is on our lee-bow, the varmint."

We both turned around hastily as he spoke, and, sure enough, a rocket was seen streaming, comet-like, through the heavens, apparently sent up from a ship well on our lee-bow.

"By the true cross!" sung out O'Shaughnessy, at this instant, "here's another fellow wasting his fireworks to windward. Shure, and, as the thief said to the hangman when he saw the crowd, we're beset — ohone!"

I could scarcely contain my laughter, although by this time rockets were rising into the air on our three sides, with a rapidity which showed that we had got somewhere into the midst of the channel fleet, and that the frigate astern was telegraphing to her consorts of our whereabouts. Our situation was alarming in the extreme. Beset on all sides, we had scarcely the slightest chance of escape, our only hope, in fact, consisting in the darkness of the night, and the ignorance of our position on the part of the men-of-war ahead. For a moment — and it was the only one of the kind in his life — our skipper seemed to be at fault; and he stood near the starboard railing, with his teeth firmly clenched and his brow contracted, gazing vacantly ahead. Suddenly, however, he turned to the man at the wheel, and ordered him to bear up toward the sail on our weather-bow. He then sent down into his cabin for a catalogue of the English navy, which we had taken in a prize but a few days before.

Meanwhile the frigate astern had vanished in the gathering gloom, while the man-of-war on our lee-bow was yet unseen. The enemy, however, off our weather cat head, began to loom faint and shadowy through the fog, and just as he became distinctly defined against the horizon, we heard the roll of the drum beating to quarters, and directly beheld in our foe a heavy frigate, with her ports open and lighted, and a formidable battery frowning across the gloom. We had by this time edged away so as to bring the Englishman a point or two on our lee-bow, and now, running up the British ensign, we bore boldly toward the foe. Every one saw that a *ruse* was intended, though in what manner it was to be executed we were yet in doubt, and more than one of us trembled for the event. A few moments of breathless suspense brought us up to the Englishman, and as we passed on opposite tacks, and looked up at his enormous hull, and his vast batteries overshadowing us, even the stoutest heart felt a momentary flutter. The captain of the frigate stood in the mizzen-rigging, looking down on our little craft, while our own skipper, with hat off gazed up at his enemy from the quarter-deck larboard gun. It was luckily too dark to see our uniforms from the frigate's deck.

"What craft is that?" thundered the English captain.

"The Alert, of his Britannic Majesty's navy — Captain Sasheby," answered the skipper. "What frigate have we had the honor of telegraphing?"

"The Achilles — Captain Norton. Come to under our lee. You were in chase; at least so we understood the lights. What has become

of the enemy? — he was the same one, we suppose, who fired the vessel whose light we saw up to windward.”

“Ay! the scoundrel was the Yankee schooner, whom the Admiralty has sent us down specially to overhaul. We lost her in the fog but thought she had gone down toward you.”

“You’d better keep less away,” said the English captain. “Fill on your course again. We shall beat up on your late track, lest the Yankee may have lain to, as the safest way to get off in this fog. If we throw up three rockets successively, we shall want you to come up toward us. If we fire two guns, the rascal will be to windward; if one, to leeward.”

“Ay, ay, sir! — fill away again!” and, with a courteous wave of the hand, the two captains parted company.

We kept away, cracking on every thing we could, and for nearly an hour our cheat remained undiscovered. At the end of that time, to judge by the rockets on the windward horizon, the three frigates learned that they had been outwitted. They doubtless gave us chase, but we were now clear of the fleet, and, more over, had some leagues start of them. Before daylight we had made the French coast, and we were safely moored, before forty-eight hours, in the harbor of Brest.

CHAPTER XIII.

BON HOMME RICHARD.

THE time sped merrily away in *la belle France*, and months passed, leaving us still in port. In fact, when our craft came to be surveyed, it was found that her hull was so rotten, as to make it dangerous for us to put to sea in her, until she had been thoroughly overhauled. This occasioned some delay. Having but little to do, and finding society thrown freely open to them, the officers spent most of their time in the interchange of courtesies with their affable entertainers. There was beside a good number of French naval officers in the place, and many a wild meeting took place between our mess and them. At length, however, I tired of this, and hearing that Paul Jones was in Paris, I set off for the capital.

That singular individual was, at this time, engaged in fitting out the BON HOMME RICHARD and her accompanying squadron, preparatory to a cruise off the English coasts. He was all enthusiasm as to the success of the expedition, but found great difficulty in pro

curing a fitting crew. He received me warmly, recognizing me at once, and flatteringly calling to mind several of the affairs in which I had been engaged, and my conduct in which he thought proper to commend. I was gratified by his notice, and spoke in reply something, I know not what, respecting his own career. His eye kindled as he answered —

“Ay ! but that is not all — we will make our name a terror to the whole English coast. Had it not been for some knavish foes of ours here, who throw every impediment they can in our way, we should have done deeds before this at which the cheeks of his majesty of England would have blanched. But our time has come. We have the ‘Goodman Richard,’ a sturdy old Indiaman, for our own craft, besides the Pallas, a smart ship, the Vengeance brig, and the Cerf, a cutter of metal. They tell me the Alliance is to go with me, under the command of that fellow Landais. So at least Franklin has said — God help his knowledge of naval warfare ! However,” he continued, with a shrug of his shoulders, “there is no help for it, and the frigate would be quite a godsend if it were not for the commander.”

“I understand you have some difficulty in getting a crew — is it so ? ”

“Yes ! And, by the by, why can’t you join me ? Come, you are the very man I want.”

Flattered as I was by this offer, I could not persuade myself to leave the FIRE FLY; beside, as the officers in the squadron were to take precedence according to the dates of their commission in the American service, and as I had always served under the commonwealth of New York, I foresaw that my acceptance of this offer would either place me under those who were really my juniors in service, or else occasion jealousies among the parties I should supplant. Moreover, I knew not what might be the eventual determination respecting my craft, and I felt unwilling, in case she should again go to sea, to desert her. I stated my objections frankly to the commodore. He hesitated a moment, and then replied,

“I believe you are right. Yet I am sorry I can not have you. We sail in a week from L’Orient. Come, at least, and see us off.”

I accepted his invitation, and it was with a heavy heart I saw them put to sea. By the end of the month, however, I heard at Paris that the squadron had returned to the roads at Groix, and that difficulties had already occurred between the commodore and Landais. I hurried down at once to L’Orient, and found both the Richard and Alliance undergoing repairs. The commodore gladly received me, and renewed again his offer, telling me he had heard that my craft was to be dismantled; and, sure enough, that afternoon I received a letter from my captain, informing me that the schooner had been found unworthy of repair, and been condemned. There was now nothing to detain me, except the difficulty respecting my rank in the squadron. This I soon removed by going as a volunteer. I

accordingly wrote to my captain, obtained leave of absence, and on the 14th of August, 1779, went with my traps on board the *Bon Homme Richard*. The same day we put out to sea.

The events of that extraordinary cruise are matter of history, and I need not dwell on them at length in this hurried autobiography. We soon parted company with our consorts, and were forced to seek them at the rendezvous; but, during the whole voyage, our plans were continually frustrated by occurrences of this character, sometimes accidental, and sometimes, I believe, designed, especially on the part of Captain Landais. After taking three or four prizes, we bore up for the north of Scotland, when having been at sea about a month, we made the Chevoit Hills, vast blue landmarks, lying, like a thunder-cloud, along the western horizon.

Learning that two or three armed cutters, together with a twenty gun ship, were lying off Leith, the commodore planned a descent on that place; but in consequence of the absence of the *Alliance*, was forced to delay his project for several days. At length we beat into the Frith of Forth; and when just out of gun-shot of the town, the boats were ordered out and manned. But at this critical moment a squall struck our squadron, and we soon had enough on our hands, for the puff settling down into a regular North Sea gale, we had to fill away, and bear up under a press-of canvas for an offing. The storm lasted so long that we were forced to give over our attempt, as the country had now become alarmed, and beacon lights, to rouse the yeomanry, were burning on every headland. We bore away, therefore, for the south.

We had kept on this course for several days, until one calm evening, off Flamborough Head, when, the sea being nearly as smooth as a lake, and a light southwardly wind dallying playfully with our sails, we discerned the headmost vessels of a fleet of merchant-ships, stretching off, on a bowline, from behind the promontory. Every man of us was instantly on the *qui vive*. The commodore's eye kindled, and he shouted.

“Signal the squadron for a general chase.”

“Ay! ay!” answered the signal officer, and the next moment the signal was passed through our fleet. It had scarcely been done, however, before the merchant-ships hurriedly tacked, fired alarm guns, let fly their top-gallant sheets and, huddling together like a flock of frightened partridges went off to leeward.

“There's a frigate in yonder, convoying, with a smaller man-of-war,” hailed the look-out as the hostile ships showed their head-sails around the promontory. “They haul up, sir, and are coming out.”

“Let them come,” said the commodore enthusiastically, “and we'll have them for our own before midnight. Show the signal to form a line — cross royal-yards — keep boldly on.”

“There goes the *Alliance*,” said the first lieutenant, at my side, “see how gallantly she passes the *Pallas* — but in God's name what does she mean? Surely she is not flying.”

"Curses on the craven Landais," muttered Paul Jones betwixt his teeth, as he saw his consort haul suddenly off from the enemy, and then turning to the helmsman, he thundered, "keep her on her course — steady, steady."

Meanwhile the crew had been ordered to quarters, and the tap of the drum brought every man to his station at once. Unmoved by the cowardice of our consort, the men appeared to long for the unequal conflict as eagerly as their daring commander. Silently they stood at the guns, awaiting the order to open their fire, and endeavoring to pierce through the fast-gathering gloom, in order to detect the maneuver of the foe. Paul Jones stood on the quarter-deck watching the enemy with a night-glass. As we drew nearer, we detected, in our antagonists, a frigate of fifty guns, attended by a twenty-gun ship a little to leeward. The sight would have appalled any hearts but those on board our daring craft, — for our armament, all told, did not exceed forty-two guns, only six of which were eighteens; while, from the lower gun deck of the frigate alone, might be seen frowning through her lighted ports, a battery of ten eighteens to a side. Yet not an eye quailed, not a cheek blanched, as we drew up toward the foe; but each man stood calmly at his post, confident in his leader and in the righteousness of his cause. My own station was near the commodore. We were now near enough to hail.

"What ship is that?" came slowly sailing on the night wind, from a dark form on the quarter of the frigate.

"You shall soon know," answered Paul Jones, and on the instant the word was given simultaneously by both commanders to fire, and the two ships poured in their batteries with scarcely the delay of an instant betwixt the broadsides. I had no time to observe the effect of our discharge, for scarcely had the commodore spoken, when I heard a tremendous explosion in the direction of our gun-room; the deck above it was blown bodily up, and as the smoke swept away from the spot, I beheld two of the eighteens shattered and dismounted, and surrounded by a crowd of wretches, maimed and dying from the accident. I rushed to the place, and a mere awful sight never before or since have I beheld. There lay our poor fellows dismembered and bleeding, groaning in agony such as no pen can picture, and crying aloud, with their dying breath, for "water — water — water." Here one, horribly mangled, hung over a gun that had burst — there another was stretched on the deck, with no marks upon him except a black spot by the eye, from which the blood was trickling slowly. I shuddered and turned away. It would have been madness to have attempted to work the other eighteens, so the men were called away, and we began anew the action, with our chances one-third lessened by this horrible calamity. But the death of their messmates fired the rest of the crew with a thirst for revenge, which soon told in the murderous fire we poured in upon the enemy. For nearly an hour we kept up the conflict, working

our lighter guns with the utmost vigor, and attempting to maneuver so as to rake the enemy, but at every new endeavor we were foiled by the superior working qualities of our opponent. Meantime the moon had risen, and we could see that the Pallas had got alongside the enemy's consort, and was gallantly engaged yard-arm to yard-arm with her — the Alliance hovering out of range in the distance, and occasionally discharging a random broadside which did no execution. How our brave fellows cursed the cowardice of her captain!

"Ay! there she is," said one, "afraid to come within range even of a twenty-gun ship, lest the lace of her coxcomb captain's uniform might be ruffled. But never mind — we'll win the battle without her — bowse away, my hearties, and give it to the Englisher with a will."

Meanwhile the enemy's frigate doggedly kept her luff, and her masts were now seen, for the hull was completely shrouded in a thick canopy of smoke, shooting ahead, as if it were her intention to pay broad off across our forefoot. Paul Jones saw the maneuver, and determined to avail himself of it to run afoul of his antagonist; for, with our vast inferiority of metal there was not the remotest chance of success in a regular combat. The attempt, however, was in itself almost as desperate; but it afforded a hope, though a slight one, of victory. Whatever might be the fate of this daring proceeding, however, we were all actuated by but one impulse, and that was a determination to conquer or die. When, therefore, the frigate forged ahead, we kept our sails trimmed and bore steadily on. The result was as we had expected. Finding that she could not effect her purpose, the frigate put her helm hard down, making a desperate attempt to clear us. It was in vain. With a crash that shook both vessels to their center, we ran aboard of the foe, bows on, a little on her weather-quarter. With chagrin, we saw that it was impossible to board our antagonist — an intention so well understood among our men, that they had ceased firing on the moment. At this instant the smoke swept partially away, and the English captain was seen near the mizzen rigging, shouting to know whether we had struck. The inquiry brought the red blood in volumes into the face of Paul Jones as he thundered hoarsely,

"I have not yet begun to fight;" and then turning to his men, he said, "out with your guns and have at them. Will you, by your silence, be thought to have surrendered?"

"Never," answered back the captain of a gun before him, "Huzza for the brave thirteen — down with the tyrants — give it to 'em one and all — huzza."

An answering shout rose up from the crew, the guns that could be brought to bear were jerked out, and simultaneously the whole of our forward larboard side was a sheet of flame, while the old craft trembled from keelson to cross-trees, and heeled back with the recoil, till the yard-arm almost touched the water.

"Brace back the yards," shouted the commodore, as soon as his

voice could be heard above the din, and obedient to the press of the wind, our vessel fell slowly astern.

"They are laying aback their forward, and shivering their after sails, on board the frigate," said Dale.

"Box-hauling her, by St. Andrew," said the commodore, "the knaves are for luffing up athwart our bows, in order to rake us. But it takes two to play at that game — we'll drop astern a little more, fill on the opposite tack, and luff up against her as she comes to the wind. Let us once lay her athwart hawse, and the battle's won."

Rapidly and steadily our daring leader gave his orders to execute this maneuver, but the smoke had settled down so thick around us, shrouding the moon almost entirely from sight that we could only now and then catch a glimpse of the approaching enemy, and miscalculating our distance, instead of meeting her as we had expected, we were run into by the frigate, her bowsprit, crashing over our high towerlike poop.

"Parker," said Paul Jones, quickly, "get some lashings and help me to fasten her head-gear to the mizzen-mast. That's it — we have her now."

"Ay, and the frigate feels the strain already," said I, as we finished our hasty work; "see how she swings around by our side — something has given way on board of her, by that crash."

"You're right, but lash fast yonder anchor that's hooked in our quarter — we'll not let them escape now — but yonder come their fellows as if to board us. Boarders ahoy! beat back the villians," and springing from my side, our ever-ready leader himself led the party to repulse the foe. I followed. Dark masses of seamen, clustered on the sides of the frigate, were endeavoring to effect an entrance on our deck; thrusting with their long pikes, cutting and slashing with their cutlasses, and cheering each other on to the attack, with shouts and imprecations. For an instant, our crew, fearfully outnumbered, seemed to waver; but at this moment Paul Jones leaped into the midst of the fray, and, with one stroke of his weapon bringing a foe to the deck, shouted,

"Down with the miscreants — strike home one and all — bravely, my lads," and accompanying each word with a blow, he cleared a space before him in less time than I have taken to narrate the event. For an instant the enemy faltered, but a huge boatswain the next moment rallied them, and aiming a pistol at Paul Jones, the fellow shouted,

"Hurl the pirates to perdition — come on, hearts of oak —"

I was luckily by, and as the villian spoke, I struck up his arm, and his ball glanced harmlessly over the Commodore's head. The boatswain did not live to take vengeance on me for my interposition — he did not even survive to finish his sentence; for scarcely had the words left his mouth, before Paul Jones drove his boarding-pike deep into the Englishman's heart. There was a dull, gungling sound,

as he fell back with out a groan, dropped heavily to the water, and sank like lead. His companions were aghast, and struck with a sudden panic, retreated. The next moment not one was left attempting to board.

During the last few minutes, my attention had been so occupied by the sharp conflict, in which I was personally engaged with the boarders, that I had lost sight altogether of the general battle; and I now cast a hurried glance around to see what other advantages, if any, we had gained over the enemy. The sight that met my eye, almost blanched my cheek with apprehension. Crowds of our men from the main-deck were hurrying up the gangways, and the thought instantly flashed across my mind that they had mutinied. The guns, too, below, were all silenced, and only three or four twelves, with a couple of pieces on the quarter-deck, were being worked; while the fire of the enemy was still kept up with unremitting fury. At this juncture, a midshipman from the main-deck passed me hurriedly. I caught him by the arm.

"In God's name," I said, "what is the matter?"

"They are ripping us to pieces below, with their cursed eighteens," was the hurried response. "We kept it up as long as we could, often thrusting our rammers into their ports as we loaded, so close were we to them. But it's no use. They're beating in our timbers as if our good stout oak was no better than pasteboard. I am taking my men forward and aloft, it is sheer murder to keep them below; they must fight now with muskets and hand grenades," and hurrying breathlessly away, he was the next instant engaged in directing his men with an energy only second to that of the Commodore, and which seemed to have diffused itself among all.

The combat, which had paused a moment, now raged again with redoubled fury. Crowding into the tops, and thronging on the fore-castle, our brave fellows kept up such a galling contest, with musketry and grenades, that, in less than five minutes, every man of the enemy was driven below, and his quarter-deck was left tenanted only by the dead. But fearfully did the foe return our fire from his heavy guns on the main-deck. Broadside after broadside was poured into us without intermission — the old craft quivering like wounded flesh at every discharge, until it seemed as if each successive fire would end the contest, by sending us to the bottom. Yet our men never flinched. No cry for quarter, no murmur even, was heard. Manfully they stuck to their new posts, keeping up their deadly warfare through the ports of the foe, and though now and then an eye was turned around the horizon, to see whether the Alliance was not coming to our aid, not a man displayed any signs of fear. One of our fellows, even bolder than the rest, provided with a bucket of grenades and a match, lay out on the yard, and coolly dropped his combustibles on the deck of the frigate. One he threw with such precision, that it went down the main hatchway. In an instant a slight explosion took place, and we could hear, notwithstanding the

uproar of guns, a whizzing sound running aft on board the enemy — while almost simultaneously, the most thrilling shrieks of anguish rose up on the air, succeeded by a stunning explosion, which drowned every other sound in its fierce uproar.

“Their loose cartridges must have been fired,” I exclaimed, “God help the poor wretches.”

“The day’s our own — huzza!” sung out a warrant officer beside me, “but in the name of heaven,” he said suddenly, what means the Alliance?— she is firing into us.”

I looked to windward, and no words can express my astonishment, when I saw, in the hazy distance, the ship which ought to have been engaged at our side with the foe, now heading to the westward, and firing hotly in our direction, at the very moment that she was crossing our larboard quarter, and when her shot could not reach the foe without passing directly through us. The discharge, indeed, dismounted two of our guns, besides damaging us aloft. She was by this time hearing us fast, and directly abeam.

“You’re firing into a friend,” shouted fifty voices in a breath.

“What does he mean?” said Dale, “surely he can see that we haven’t yellow sides like the foe — show him the signal of recognition.”

The three lanterns, in a line, were instantly let down on the off side, when the Alliance ceased firing.

The enemy could hold out no longer. A man darted up the frigate’s hatchway, dashed aft, and the next moment the cross of Britain was at our feet. A cheer, that shook the welkin, and which, dying away, was renewed and renewed again, burst from our brave tars, and rolling down to leeward, announced our hard-bought victory.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SHIPWRECK.

THE arrival of our battered fleet in the Texel, was the signal for a diplomatic war betwixt the ministers of England, Holland, and France. The result of this encounter of wits, was the secret transfer of the captured ships to the latter power, and an order from the Prince of Orange to quit his dominions. Accordingly, Paul Jones, having superseded Landais in command of the Alliance, put to sea on the 27th of December, 1779, and after running the gauntlet of the channel fleet, and approaching near enough to the Downs to examine its force, reached the roads of Groix on the 10th of February, 1780, in safety. As these things are matters of history, I briefly pass them over, the more readily because I did not myself accompany the commodore; for having found a letter from my captain, lying for me at Amsterdam, requiring my return to Paris, I seized the first opportunity and started for France within a fortnight after the capture of the Serapis.

Our run through the straits was pleasant, and we had every prospect of a speedy voyage until our second day out, when the wind freshened into a gale, and before night it was blowing, as the old tars had it, "great guns and marline-spikes." Every thing, however, was made fast and clean, and toward midnight I sought my hammock, and in a few moments, with a sailor's carelessness, had forgotten our danger in sleep. How long I slept I can not tell, but I was suddenly aroused from my slumbers by the heeling of the ship, and as I started up in my berth, I heard the salt water dashing through the cabin, and roaring in the hold as if the bulkheads were giving way. The lights were out, and I could see nothing, but I knew by the sound that the water was pouring in a cataract down the companion-way, and that all escape therefore by that path was cut off. Could the ship be sinking? — had she broached to? — where were the crew? were the questions that rushed through my mind at that awful moment. I listened a second to hear, if I could, any signs of my fellow-passengers in the cabin; but the place appeared to be deserted. Knowing that no time was to be lost, I sprang to the window in the stern, but — Good God! the dead lights were in, and all escape by that way was closed on me. Louder and louder roared the waters into the cabin, already they were dashing their cold spray around me, and in a few seconds they would submerge my berth. Death stared me in the face — death too, in its most

horrid guise. My brain whirled, my knees shook, my skin felt cold as the grave, and my usually buoyant heart sank within me. But these feelings triumphed only for a moment. My native resolution came speedily to my aid, and I determined to die, since die I must, like the old philosopher who wrapped his garments around him and lay down as if to a pleasant sleep. At this instant I suddenly remembered that the cabin had an outlet overhead, and groping my way along, half buried in water the while, I caught hold of the framework of the binnacle, and dashing the glass out with my hand, raised myself up, and, the next minute, crawled on deck. For an instant — so terrific was the violence of the gale which swept past me — I could neither see, hear nor stand. The rain and hail beating fiercely against me, pinned me down to the spot which I had first gained, while the thunder of the hurricane that went whistling and roaring by, seemed to forebode the approach of the final day itself. Oceans of water deluged the deck, hissing past me like the scornful laughter of fiends. At length I managed to raise my head and cast a glance at the scene around me. The darkness was almost impenetrable, but sufficient light existed to convince me that the decks were deserted, and that the ship was lying on her beam-ends, with cataracts of water rolling momentarily over her windward side. Oh! God, what a ruin! Officer and man, passengers and crew, all, all had been swept away by the devouring surge, and I alone was left, preserved almost by a miracle. I gazed to leeward, but only a waste of driving foam met my eye — I looked astern, nothing but the green monsters of the deep, rolling mountain high, were seen. At this instant another deluge of foam whistled past, blinding my eyes with spray, and jerking me with a giant's power from my hold. Buried in brine, bruised, despairing, and almost stunned, I thought my hour had come, and breathing a momentary prayer to heaven for mercy, I resigned myself to death. Suddenly my hand struck against something, which, with an instinctive love for life, I grasped. My progress was instantaneously checked, and, although the resistance almost snapped my arms from their sockets, I still clung to the object I had caught. When the billow had whirled past, and the spray had ceased to blind my eyes I saw that I had seized one of the posts of the bulwarks. Taking advantage of a momentary lull, I crept to a place of greater security, and sat down to ponder over my chances of escape.

All through that awful night I clung to my frail support, expecting momentarily to be swept from it into eternity. Language can not describe my feelings. No pen can paint the horrors of those long and dreary hours. The air grew intensely cold: the rain became hail. The sky, if possible, lowered more gloomily, and the billows rolled higher and higher around me, while the deep tones of the tempest mingled with the chafing of the surges, rose up over all like the wild choral symphony which we dream of as forever rising from the world of ruin and despair. Borne aloft on the waves, or

hurried down into the abyss, drenched, bruised, and bewildered, I saw no gleam of hope. Beneath me was the boiling deep -- above me the sky seemed settling bodily down. Now the gale whistled shrilly past, or now wailed moaningly away to leeward. Darkness and terror were all around me.

At length the morning dawned, but slowly and despairingly. The gale somewhat subsided, too; but its violence was still terrific. In the eastern firmament there was a dull, misty light, hanging like a belt along the seaboard, but the sun itself was completely obscured. By the faint glimmer thus thrown around the scene, I hoped to distinguish some approaching sail. It was in vain. Nothing met my vision, save the wild waste tossing to and fro in agony. Again and again I looked, — but again and again in vain. At length I caught sight of what would have seemed to a landsman to be the foam on the crest of a far-off wave, but which I knew to be a sail. How my heart throbbed as I watched the course of the approaching craft! I soon made her out to be a ship drifting before the gale under a close-reefed main-course, and as she approached nearer, I saw that she was an English man-of-war. Captivity was better than death, and I did not therefore hesitate. I shouted aloud. But I might as well have lifted up my voice against thunder. I waved my arm aloft. It was in vain. I clambered up on the weather-quarter, and once more waving my arm, shouted with superhuman strength. The head of the frigate came gallantly around, and with a cry of joy, I saw the man-of-war make toward me. Big tears of gratitude rushed into my eyes, and my throat parched with emotion. On came the noble stranger, swinging her tall masts gracefully, and in a few minutes she was close on to me. I could see the look-outs gazing toward me. In a little space I should be rescued. At this moment a billow broke over me again, but undaunted by the drenching, when I rose to the surface, I turned gayly in the direction of the frigate. God of my fathers! — she was not to be seen! I gazed with a throbbing heart to windward, and there was the man-of-war, edging away from me as if unconscious of my presence. I gazed speechlessly on her. The truth broke agonizingly on me. The frigate had approached the wreck, and not seeing me, had thought all on board lost, and resumed her course. In vain I shouted, and in vain I waved my arm frantically on high. I felt from the first there was no hope, and at length, giving over every effort, I crouched down once more in that state of complete exhaustion, both mentally and physically, which ensues, when the excitement of hope is followed by the certainty of despair.

The day wore on. The tempest slowly abated. Yet no welcome sail met my vision, unless a few far-off crafts which crossed the seaboard, hull down, and which brought no hope, could be called welcome. As hour after hour wore away, my hold on life grew weaker and weaker. My physical powers, I felt, could not much longer en-

dure this exposure to tempest and cold. Already the blood seemed at a stand in my extremities, and I fancied I felt the cold chill shuddering up to my heart. A drowsiness came over me. But rallying myself, I beat my hands and stamped my feet to invigorate, if possible, the vital current. At length I paused from sheer exhaustion. Still no aid appeared. My spirits at length flagged. I felt that utter prostration which, by taking away the spring of hope, deprives us of all motive for exertion, and is the sure forerunner of a death of despair. I lost all longing for life. The sensation of cold subsided. I felt no pain. A dreamy bliss crept soothingly over my soul — the sea, the sky, the air, the wreck swam around before me — visions such as no mortal eye hath seen or imagined, thronged on my brain — an ecstasy I can not describe, but which makes my hand even now tremble with rapture, possessed me, — and then all is blank.

Again, and I dreamed. I seemed to be in the center of a vast void, a universe of darkness and obscurity. Yet all was not gloom. For amid the shadowy firmament appeared a fair bright face beaming upon me like an angel's from the clouds — a face whose features were written on my inmost heart, so soft and seraphic was their expression! I knew it — it was that of Beatrice. The mild blue eye, the hair of wavy gold, the brow that rivaled a Madonna's, and more than all, the smile which now appeared all glorified, told me that face was hers. And it gazed on me with pity and love. And then I heard a voice — like and yet unlike hers, for the tone was that of Beatrice, but even sweeter, and, oh! how heavenly! The very air seemed music. Was she, indeed a beatified spirit sent to waft me onward to a brighter world!

But once more all was dark — a voiceless void! I had but one feeling, and that was of being. I knew not, heard not, saw not. I could not think. But my soul was, as it were, agony itself.

At length a light broke in on that void. My brain swam and I faintly opened my eyes. Was I yet an inhabitant of earth? The bed, the curtains, the room beyond convinced me at length that I lived. I feebly raised myself up and gazed around. A footstep approached. Overcome with faintness I sank down. A hand put aside the curtains, a cry of joy broke from the intruder, a hot tear drop fell on my face. I looked up, and there was Beatrice!

"My own —" I faintly articulated.

"Hush! — not a word yet," she said archly, placing her fingers x her lips with a smile.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

THE cool breath of morning was blowing through the open casement, when I awoke on the ensuing day, and as the wind dallied with the curtains of my bed and kissed my fevered brow, I felt an exhilaration of spirits which no one can fully appreciate who has not experienced the torture of a bed of sickness.

My dreams had been pleasant during my repose, for they were of Beatrice. Overcome by exhaustion, I had sunk into a slumber almost immediately after my faint attempt to address her; but I knew not how long I slept; for, although it was now early morning, I had no means of telling at what hour I had awoke the day before. No one appeared to be stirring in the room. The mild light of an October sun lay in rich masses on the carpet, while occasionally the brown vine-leaves outside the casement, would rustle pleasantly in the breeze. How I gazed on the patch of blue sky discernible through that open window — how I longed to be wandering free and uncontrolled over the rich plains and up the glowing hill-sides that stretched away before the vision. Oh! there is nothing so glorious to the sick man as a sunny morning. At this instant a bird whistled outside the casement. How my blood danced at the lightsome tone! A succession of dreamy, delicious feelings floated through my soul, and I lay for some moments motionless, but dissolved in gratitude.

I raised myself feebly up, and faintly pushing aside the curtain, strove to obtain a survey of my apartment. At length my thoughts reverted to my situation. When I lost my consciousness, I was on a deserted deck — now I was lying in a spacious apartment, in perfect security. Who could explain this mystery? It was a rich, even luxurious room. The furniture was of the costliest and most tasteful pattern, and the arrangement of the different articles was made with an artist's eye to the keeping — if I may so speak — of the whole. A stand just in front of me held a bouquet of fresh flowers, which, from their rarity, must have come from some greenhouse. On the opposite wall hung a glorious picture of the Madonna, with

her golden hair and beatified countenance, gazing down, with that smile which Raphael has made immortal, on the infant on her knee. A dim recollection floated through my brain that I had seen that smile before, only the features which then accompanied it, had been like those of Beatrice, rather than of the picture. Suddenly that angel face I had seen in my dream, flashed on me. I knew it all now. It had been, while gazing on this divine portrait in my delirium, that my fancy had imagined it the face of Beatrice, smiling down upon me from the clouds.

It was evident that Beatrice had some connection with my present situation, for I was convinced that I had seen her the preceding day. Where was she now?—How long had I been sick in this place?—And in what manner was she I loved involved in my rescue, were questions that continually forced themselves on my mind, until my still weak brain began to be dizzy with the mystery. Putting my hands to my brow I strove to drive away such thoughts; but they only returned with tenfold force. I would have risen to solve the mystery, but my strength proved insufficient to the task, and I sank back on my pillow. A half hour must have thus passed, when I heard a light footstep on the carpet, and in an instant my heart was throbbing, and the blood dancing in my veins. In a moment I should see Beatrice again. I gazed in the direction whence the sound of the steps proceeded, and the name of her I adored was already trembling on my lips, when a hand gathered back the curtain, and I saw, not Beatrice, but an elderly Frenchwoman, whose dress bespoke her a nurse. Never did a wayworn pilgrim, fancying he beheld the minaret of the holy city in the distance, gaze on a *mirage* with more disappointment than I did on the countenance of my visitor. But my curiosity soon triumphed over my disappointment. Perhaps she read my thoughts, for a smile of equivocal meaning gradually stole into the corners of her mouth as she returned my gaze. She was the first to speak.

“Is Monsieur better?” she inquired.

“Yes,” I replied, “I am almost well—sufficiently so, at least to feel curiosity. In a word, how, and when did I come here? Who am I to thank as my preserver?”

“Monsieur has more questions to ask than even a Parisian *grille* could answer,” she replied, evasively. “Besides, his physician says he must be kept quiet. I can only tell him for the present what he is in France. Let him be patient and he shall soon know all. He is at any rate among friends, and when he gets stronger he will hear his story from other lips than mine.”

All this was accompanied with a meaning smile that left no doubt on my mind to whom she alluded, and as she seconded her words by drawing the curtains together as if to retire, I was fain to be content. In addition to this, moreover, I felt that I had already exerted myself sufficiently in conversation, for my brain was dizzy

with the few words I had spoken. So I closed my eyes, and, like one wearied out with toil, in a few minutes was asleep.

Several days elapsed, during which I saw no one but the nurse, and now and then a servant or two in a rich livery, who brought in the tray. To all my inquiries I received the same answer, until at length, unbounded as was my curiosity, I gave over the attempt, comforting myself with the conviction that, in a day or two more, I should hear my story from the loved lips of Beatrice herself.

At length I was able to sit up, and when the formal old physician appeared, he announced to me with a meaning smile, that he would now permit me to receive visitors. He added that my host and hostess were anxious to pay their compliments in person, and had only been prevented hitherto from doing so by my extreme weakness, and his express commands. All this had an air of mystery about it which, however, I had not time to unravel, for the physician had scarcely ceased speaking when the door opened and my entertainers entered, announced by a servant in rich livery. I started and crimsoned to the brow, but a hasty glance assured me that Beatrice was not there. The wonder increased, — but the physician left me no time for thought, for, advancing on the instant, he introduced my visitors to me formally as a Baron and Baroness de St. Allaire. They were both somewhat in years, at least past their prime, but their manners, apart from their former kindness to me, would have attracted me to them at once. The Baron was a stately Frenchman, of the school of *le grand monarque*, very formal, very dignified, but withal kind-hearted. His lady possessed one of the most benignant countenances I ever recollect to have seen. Her smile was peculiarly sweet. Her years sat on her lightly, and with all the propriety of her age she had all the liveliness of youth. It was not long, therefore, before I was perfectly at ease. The Baron expressed his satisfaction at my rapid improvement for the better, complimented himself on his good fortune in being my host, hoped that I found the prospect from my window pleasant, and all this, too, with a formality, yet an affability, that realized my idea of the old French chevalier. His lady was less precise, and consequently more winning. She conversed even gayly, and on a variety of subjects, all, however, having a bearing on my illness. Yet, with a tact which I could not but admire, she avoided every allusion to the means by which I had become her guest, reminded me of a skillful advocate in a bad cause, always hovering about but never approaching the issue. A quarter of an hour was thus spent, and I had determined to relieve my eager curiosity by broaching the subject myself at the first pause in the conversation, but, as if anticipating my design, the Baroness suddenly rose, and still continuing her gay remarks, fairly complimented herself out of the room before I had the chance to speak without violating all etiquette by interrupting the good lady. I fancied, as she closed the door with an

"Adieu, Monsieur," that there was malice in her provoking smile, betokening a lurking consciousness that she had outwitted me. At first I was half disposed to feel angry, it was so evident that my curiosity was trifled with. My patience nearly gave way at these continued disappointments. Yet I had nothing at which I could rationally get displeased. It was in vain for me to feel angry — my discomfiture had been too adroitly managed — and at length I fairly burst into a laugh at my own expense.

"You are pleased to be merry," said a silvery voice behind me, and a low glad laugh that rung through the chamber like fairy music, echoed my own. I started up at once. I knew I could not be mistaken. The next moment Beatrice was in my arms.

The rapture of that reunion I shall not attempt to portray. If my readers have been young, and after having been separated for years from the one they loved, have met her as their preserver, they can appreciate my feelings. I draw a veil over the sacred emotions of that interview. Nor will I repeat the thousand questions which were asked and answered almost in the same breath.

It was some ten minutes before Beatrice narrated the circumstances which had transpired since I parted with her in Charleston. Nor did she, even when she began, give me a connected account. There were too many questions to be asked, and too many inquiries to be answered, all growing, it is true, out of her story, but all sadly at variance with the course of the narration, to permit a continuous tale. At length, however, I learned all, or nearly all, for there were a few things which the dear girl did not tell me until long after, — and even then not without a blush at her avowal.

My first inquiry was about her own fortunes, but she would not answer me until I had told her how I came on the wreck, and she had acquainted me with the manner of my rescue. I will give it in her own words.

"When you lost your consciousness you were, I fancy, nearer to aid than you imagined, for a French privateer that was hovering along the coast discovered the wreck, and making for it rescued you, almost exhausted it is true, but still retaining life. You were insensible, and well-nigh frozen to death. But the exertions of your preservers finally restored you to life, though not to consciousness. You fell into a raging fever in which you raged in a constant delirium. The captain of the privateer, having occasion to put into port the following day, brought you on shore, and suspecting you to be an Englishman from your language, unfeelingly consigned you to the common jail hospital, among the poorest and most degraded of human beings. There you lay the whole of the ensuing night, scarcely tended even by the callous nurses of those establishments. No one knew your name; your dress was not a uniform; and death was rapidly approaching to consign you to an unknown grave. But Providence did not will that such should be your fate. An all-seeing eye

beheld you; an omnipotent arm interposed to save you. And the means of your preservation were so fortuitous as to seem almost those of chance. The confessor of the Baroness was in the habit of visiting the prison — for we reside but a short drive from the town — and while giving consolation to one of those miserable wretches — oh! I shudder to think that you were once there — he heard a sick man in a neighboring ward raving of a name,” and here the dear girl covered her face in confusion, “which was familiar to him. Need I say it was mine? He listened, and heard enough to satisfy him that you were acquainted with me. He made inquiries, learned how you came there — and you can imagine the rest.”

“That I was brought here and saved from death,” said I, looking fondly into Beatrice’s face. “But you have not told me how you came here, or what tie exists between you and our hostess.”

“Oh! she is my cousin. I spent some years here in early childhood. But to tell my story I must go back to when we last parted in Charleston.”

“Very well. I listen.”

“You know,” sweetly began Beatrice, “how much I feared, when you were in Charleston, that my uncle would make himself obnoxious to the colonial authorities, and endanger perhaps his life. You knew also, that he seemed resolved to bring about a union betwixt his son and myself. The necessity of obtaining my uncle’s sanction to my marriage under the penalty of forfeiting my fortune, weighed but lightly with me, for I knew his hostility to you to be unjust. Yet, as the representative of my deceased parent, I wished, if possible, to win Mr. Rochester’s sanction. His persevering determination to unite me to his son prevented all hope of this; and it was not long after our parting that I saw he would never consent to my becoming the bride of any one but his heir. Besides, he grew every day more openly hostile to the colonies. Unjust as I felt he was to me, I yet loved him as my mother’s brother, and I trembled for his life. But death suddenly interposed and calmed my fears, only, however, to awaken my grief. In the grave I buried my wrongs. I saw in him, then only my protector in a strange land — my nearest living relative the one with whom my sainted mother had spent her childhood. My uncle’s decease at once changed my fortunes. The only impediment to my enjoyment of my father’s estate was now removed, and I was free to bestow my hand on whomsoever I wished. My cousin renewed his offer, at a decent interval after his father’s death, but, need I say, I courteously, yet firmly refused it. My longer stay in Charleston was now a matter of delicacy, for I had no relatives there except the family of Mr. Rochester, and they naturally viewed my decision with feelings more favorable to my cousin than to myself. Under these circumstances I availed myself of an opportunity that just then presented to sail for this country, where my relative the Baroness with whom I had spent some years in childhood, resided.

She had continued in correspondence with me ever since, and had urged me in every letter to visit her, even if I could not come and make my home with her. Little did I think that I should meet you under the circumstances in which I did."

I have little more to add. Of the letters which I had written to Beatrice some miscarried, some were lost in captured ships, and a few reached her months after they had been penned. Her answers came with even more irregularity, for since the day we had parted in Charleston I had received but a solitary epistle from her. Now, however, every disappointment was amply redressed. She sat beside me with her hand in mine, and her soft eyes looking smilingly up into my face.

"But why," said I at length, "was so much mystery preserved respecting your presence here? And why, after I had recognized you on my first awakening from delirium, did you order the nurse — for you only could have done so — to avoid all mention of your name, to conceal from me in whose house I was?"

"That was a scheme adopted as much from the orders of the physician as from any other motive. He feared that the least agitation would bring back your fever, and he enjoined secrecy on the nurse, as the surest way to keep you composed."

I would have said how much he had failed of success had I not been too full of happiness to condemn even a formal old physician.

The period of my convalescence is one written on my inmost heart in characters never to be obliterated. Oh! those were delicious hours. With Beatrice beside me I would sit gazing out on the sunny landscape beneath the window, or wander through the rich garden which surrounded the chateau. Or, perhaps, she would ply her needle while I would read to her. And then she would sing some of the old songs of her native land. And by and by the Baroness would come, and with her ever sunny mind join in the conversation. Years, long eventful years, have passed since then, and God knows too many of those I loved are now in their graves, but the memory of that fortnight of happiness never fails to restore gladness to my heart, even in its utmost sorrow.

But I have too long forgotten the little FIRE-FLY. It will be recollected that I had left Holland with the intention of joining my old commander at Paris, and I now seized the earliest opportunity of communicating my present situation to him by letter. A reply soon arrived by which I learned that, although the FIRE-FLY had been condemned, a brig had been chartered, and that he intended returning to America with his officers and most of his crew in her. They had been in the greatest anxiety respecting my fate, and had finally given me up for lost. The letter informed me that the day of sailing had been fixed, and that before I could return an answer the brig would have broke ground. My old commander ended by hoping that I might soon be able to rejoin him in the United States — although he

added a gay postscript, to say that he understood there was great probability of my choosing another mistress than glory.

Meanwhile I slowly recovered, and as every obstacle to my union with Beatrice was now removed, I did not hesitate to press the dear girl to name an early day for the realization of our nuptials. With a thousand blushes she referred me to the Baron and his lady, promising in the softest whisper, as if she feared to trust herself to speak, to abide by their decision. Need I say how speedily I availed myself of the permission, or how warmly I petitioned for as short a delay as possible?

At length the day was named, and though I was condemned to wait a whole month, in the company of Beatrice it glided away almost insensibly.

The morning at length dawned. 'T was a bright sunny day in early winter, and never shall I forget the cheery sound of the village bells ringing to announce my approaching nuptials. The air was keen and frosty; not a cloud was in the sky; the brown woods fairly glowed in the sunlight; and, in a word, had I chosen the day, a more fitting one could not have been selected. My lady readers may expect a description of the dress of the bride, the carriage, the feast, and a thousand other things, but as I am no Sir Charles Grandison, I shall pass them over without comment. I will only say that Beatrice — my own Beatrice at last — never looked lovelier than when she descended to the porch, where we were all awaiting her, on that marriage morn. The smile, the blush, the look of unreserved affection as her eye was raised timidly to my face and then dropped, I shall never forget. The Baron gave her away, the nuptial vow was said, and with a tumult of feelings I cannot describe, I pressed her to my bosom — a wife. A tear was on her cheek, but I kissed it holily away.

We remained in France for nearly a year after our union, and even after that prolonged stay, could hardly tear ourselves from the Baron and his lady. But the prospect of peace daily growing stronger, we availed ourselves of the kind offer of the French monarch, and sailed for America in one of our ally's frigates. I never, however, served again, for the war was in fact terminated, but thereafter spent my life in the bosom of my family.

As the magician, after having summoned up and marshaled before him a phantasmagoria of shadowy figures, at length perceives them fading from his sight, and conscious that the spell is fast departing, lays down his rod, so we, approaching to the end of our task, find that the charm is beginning to lose its power, and that the beings we have conjured up are melting rapidly from our vision. Even now they seem to us only as a dream. Yet there is one glimpse more afforded to us before the magic curtain falls on them forever. It is that of a happy fireside and a smiling circle around it. Nor are the principals in that domestic scene wholly unfamiliar to us, for in the

mild eyes and Madonna-like countenance of the one, and in the well-known face and embrowned features of the other, we recognize two of those who have figured as the chief personages in our story. Years have not impaired the beauty of Beatrice, for they have fallen as light on her as blossoms. But she is not now alone in her loveliness, for at her knee is one, like and yet unlike her, younger, but not more beautiful, gayer, but with scarcely less sweetness. Need we say of whom the group is composed.

THE END.

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Escaping the Draft. For numerous males.	The Battle Call. A Recitative. For one male.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 4.

The Frost King. For ten or more persons.	The Stubb'etown Volunteer. 2 males, 1 female.
Starting in Life. Three males and two females.	A Scene from "Paul Pry." For four males.
Faith, Hope and Charity. For three little girls.	The Charms. For three males and one female.
Darby and Joan. For two males and one female.	Bee, Clock and Broom. For three little girls.
The May. A Floral Fancy. For six little girls.	The Right Way. A Colloquy. For two boys.
The Enchanted Princess. 2 males, several females.	What the Ledger Says. For two males.
Honor to Whom Honor is Due. 7 males, 1 female.	The Crimes of Dress. A Colloquy. For two boys.
The Gentle Client. For several males, one female.	The Reward of Benevolence. For four males.
Phrenology. A Discussion. For twenty males.	The Letter. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 5.

The Three Guesses. For school or parlor.	Putting on Air. A Colloquy. For two males.
Sentiment. A "Three Person," Farce.	The Straight Mark. For several boys.
Behind the Curtain. For males and females.	Two Ideas of Life. A Colloquy. For ten girls.
The Eta Pi Society. Five boys and a teacher.	Extract from Marino Faliero.
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The Way They Kept a Secret. Male and females.	The Two Counselors. For three males.
The Poet under Difficulties. For five males.	The Votaries of Folly. For a number of females.
William Tell. For a whole school.	Aunt Betsy's Beaux. Four females and two males.
Woman's Rights. Seven females and two males.	The Libel Suit. For two females and one male.
All is not Gold that Glitters. Male and females.	Santa Claus. For a number of boys.
The Generous Jew. For six males.	Christmas Fairies. For several little girls.
Shopping. For three males and one female.	The Three Rings. For two males.

Dime School Series—Dialogues.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 26.

<p>Poor cousins. Three ladies and two gentlemen. Mountains and mole-hills. Six ladies and several spectators. A test that did not fail. Six boys. Two ways of seeing things. Two little girls. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched. Four ladies and a boy. All is fair in love and war. 3 ladies, 2 gentlemen. How uncle Josh got rid of the legacy. Two males, with several transformations.</p>	<p>The lesson of mercy. Two very small girls. Practice what you preach. Four ladies. Politician. Numerous characters. The canvassing agent. Two males and two females. Grub. Two males. A slight scare. Three females and one male. Embodied sunshine. Three young ladies. How Jim Peters died. Two males.</p>
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DIME DIALOGUES No. 27.

<p>Fatsey O'Dowd's campaign. For three males and one female. Hasty inferences not always just. Numerous boys. Discontented Annie. For several girls. A double surprise. Four males and one female. What was it? For five ladies. What will cure them? For a lady and two boys. Independent. For numerous characters. Each season the best. For four boys. Tried and found wanting. For several males. A boy's plot. For several characters.</p>	<p>The street girl's good angel. For two ladies and two little girls. "That ungrateful little nigger." For two males. If I had the money. For three little girls. Appearances are deceitful. For several ladies and one gentleman. Love's protest. For two little girls. An enforced cure. For several characters. Those who preach and those who perform. For three males. A gentle conquest. For two young girls.</p>
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DIME DIALOGUES No. 28.

<p>A test that told. For six young ladies and two gentlemen. Organizing a debating society. For four boys. The awakening. For four little girls. The rebuke proper. For 3 gentlemen, 2 ladies. Exorcising an evil spirit. For six ladies. Both sides of the fence. For four males. The spirits of the wood. For two troupes of girls.</p>	<p>No room for the drone. For three little boys. Arm-chair. For numerous characters. Measure for measure. For four girls. Saved by a dream. For two males and two females. An infallible sign. For four boys. A good use for money. For six little girls. An agreeable profession. For several characters.</p>
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DIME DIALOGUES No. 29.

<p>Who shall have the dictionary? For six typical male characters and two females. The test of bravery. For four boys and teacher. Fortune's wheel. For four male characters. The little aesthetes. For six little girls. The yes and no of smoke. For three little boys. No references. Six gentlemen and three ladies. An amazing good boy. One male, one female. What a visitation did. For several ladies.</p>	<p>Simple Simon. For four little boys. The red light. For four males, two females. The sweetest thought. For four little girls. The inhuman monster. 6 ladies, 1 gentleman. Three little fools. For four small boys. Beware of the dog! For three ladies and three "dodgers." Joe Hunt's hunt. For two boys and two girls. Rags. For six males.</p>
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